

I. Introduction

Kamala Prunia Taylor was born in a small town in Mysore in 1924. She attended the University of Madras in 1940 where she studied history from 1940 to 1947. She worked as a journalist and also published short stories in Indian news paper. During the war, she worked for the army in India and later returned to journalism. Kamala Markandaya is an Indo British novelist whose works first published in the 1950s.

Kamala Markandaya had settled in England since the age of 25 when she married to Bertrand Taylor. Indian American author, Shashi Tharoor, put it succinctly when he admitted that Markandaya was a pioneer who influenced all other Indians writing in English. Fame and success came with her first published novel; *Nectar in a Sieve* (1954). It had been a book of the Month club which is the best seller in the United States. In 1955, the American Library Association named it a notable book. This novel was followed by nine others: *Some Inner Fury* (1955) *Silence of Desire* (1960) *Possession* (1963) *A Handful of Rice* (1966) *The Loffer Dams* (1969) *The Nowhere Man* (1972), *Two Virgins* (1973). *The Golden Honey Comb* (1977) and *Pleasure City* (Titled *Shalimar* in American edition 1982). In the US, her early novels were published by John Day and co, the same outfit that published the works of Jawaharlal Nehru.

Charles R. Laisen Chair of Dept. of literature in American University, Washington, D.C. who once noted that her most popular novels *Nectar in a Sieve* and *A Handful of Rice* were taught in hundreds of American courses both in public schools and the universities. From the 1960s onwards it was a common sight to find Markandaya's novel on the shelves of bookstores throughout America as well as in public library.

Indo Canadian poet and academic Uma Parameswaran, who has studied Markandaya's novels and interviewed her is of the opinion that she is the pioneer member of the Indian diaspora. Parameswaran adds Markandaya's strength as novelist comes from her sensitive

creation of individual characters and situations which are simultaneously representative of larger collective Indians. Her prose style is mellifluous and controlled.

Markandaya's novel set in 1968, talks not only about the violence of racism but also other diasporic realities, educational degrees that are not given accreditation, the resistance of immigrants to the expectations of the host culture, chasm of communication between generations, cultural values and needless cultural baggage.

Style and Technique

Review of literature: Kamala Markandaya chooses the most suitable narrative technique for the theme. Her technique in this sense becomes the means of persuasion and enables her to stir her intended idea in readers. Markandaya not only focuses on the social. Political, economic and cultural problems alone but rather juxtaposes all these elements with human tragedy in order to show how individual life is conditioned. It is the treatment of tradition and modernity that distinguishes Markandaya with her contemporaries; Ruth Pravar Jhavala, Anita Desai and Nayanatara Seegal. She makes her protagonist love and respect the man-made conventional moral.

Markandaya idealizes womanhood in her novels; most of her novels have female characters. This indicates her interest in woman characters. K.S.N. Rao has remarked that "Markandaya has no heroes but only heroines" (37). Comparing the treatment of woman by Markandaya with Virginia Woolf, B .Sudipta clearly states:

Both of them have evocatively delineated women simultaneously; from the plane of orthodoxy to the changing modern trends in contemporary society. The cultural background of Woolf and Markandaya is Polaristic, but the juxtapositioning of their protagonists has dissolved all notes of dissonance. This has brought the evidence of woman's fate being universally similar, on

predicaments being either on an emotional level or on both physical and emotional. (85)

What is most significant in all the themes of Markandaya are the protagonists originating from different strata of society. So, Markandaya's women are earthy and real while Woolf's women are sensitive and ephemeral. The main point of congruency is their familial affiliations.

Markandaya uses first person pronoun 'I' to narrate the events and incidents which makes the heroine and narrator same. It supports Markandaya to achieve objectivity and reality in her novels. Since the narrator is one of the characters and the narration is carried out on first person, Markandaya, as stated by Arnold Kettle, "gains the advantages of lending its authenticity to the narrator. It also provides the necessary distance between the writer and narrator" (178).

Primarily concerned in persuading reader about the existence of Indian people in the midst of their social, economic and political obstacle, for its clarity, Markandaya never brings sub-plot rather weaves fact after fact, situation after situation i.e. every details that affect the life of character is presented in chronological order. Her novels are not mere narration of incidents but rather an artistic interpolation of cause and effect sequences. One naturally and convincingly followed by the next. Her first novel, *Nectar in a sieve*, is the best illustration of the aforementioned technique. While presenting the story through Rukmani, Markandaya uses both pictorial and dramatic methods. There are dramatic moments when Nathan confesses his illicit relationship with Kunti or when Raja is killed and the body is brought to Rukmani and of the last moments of Nathan before he dies. Though every description appears to be poetic and touches the lyrical heights but each detail is presented in convincing way.

In her writing, Markandaya has strong inclination towards the Indian culture. For instance in *Some Inner Fury* the strong desire for birth of a son to the parents is unraveled because it is believed amongst the Indians that the son can perpetuate the family name and is permitted to light the funeral pyre. The couples who parented a son are assured of attaining "moksha". But quite contrarily the birth of girls is not considered as happiness because parents have to manage vast dowry in their marriages. Hence, Indian culture with its multiple ethos plays the vital role in her novel but it is always juxtaposed with western one.

Regarding the language and selection of words, unlike her contemporary, Anita Desai, Markandaya never provides a list of words and explanation at the beginning or end of the book that results explications because Markandaya claims if the Indian.

If the Indian words and their meanings for the benefit of the non- Indian readers are given in the text, the reader is constantly obliged to turn pages and there by miss the tempo of the reading material on hand (183).

Markandaya never does aim at Indianizing English in the name of verisimilitude. Her English is pure and idiomatic and her style lucid. Unlike Raja Rao and Mulka Raj Anand, she doesn't add suffixes to indianize the words nor does she indulge in giving vernacular color. Similarly, Kamala Markandaya doesn't attempt at the psychological exploration of her characters. Her vision of life is clear. She upholds human values and principles like the spiritual and the moral; she is against the oppressions in any form- political, economic cultural or racial. Markandaya uses the novelistic devices like irony and imagery sparingly.

Kamala Markandaya, thus, through her most appropriate technique makes the reading of her novels themselves a journey throughout India with all its strengths and weakness, problems and challenge. The use of first person narration in her novel helps the readers to generate the unforgettable experience.

Markandaya as a Novelist

Kamala Markandaya occupies a prominent place among younger generation Indian novelists. Her style of writing is not as conservative as Indian writing has been in the past. The sentiment of Markandaya's fictions is painted by her personal views, Indian culture as parental heritage and her intimacy with the Western culture. A reader also gets the process of change as blood flowing in her novels. Markandaya's novels basically represent the transitional period in India after the decolonization. Markandaya's novels always highlight the superstitions prevailing in post colonial India. At the same time she also juxtaposes the western intellectual, scientific and educated culture. Here, Markandaya's job is not to resist the western culture but rather to show how these diverse cultures have affected Indian life. The juxtaposition of East and the Western culture enables Markandaya to show what actually Indian culture is. In her novels, she depicts the various changes which have affected Indian lives since independence. The post -colonial Indian women have been radically affected by such matters as the increase of western style in education in various aspects like choice in marriage partner, urbanization industrialization career, expectation and the loosening of the joint family. Markandaya is sensitively able to record the crisis of Indian colonial impact even after independence. This crisis in her novel leads to drifting lives and the sense of 'nostalgia'. Her novels are set in the social context and try to focus on various aspects to Indian life. Her characters struggle to achieve the goal in a complicated and unsympathetic world. It is undoubtedly one of the presentations of Indian women not as meek, weak but rather quite courageous, audacious to act out in complicated Indian society.

Though Markandaya has written only ten novels but she has treated different aspects of life: social, political, cultural, economical subject matters. To achieve the goal in this dissertation, her novels bringing interracial interaction will be taken under consideration.

Novels: Women's Search for Self Identity

In study of the novels of Kamala Markandaya, we cannot ignore the 'women subject' because women have a significant place in her novels and most of the women characters are presented within domestic wall. In this sense, her investigation and presentation of feminine consciousness is directed towards an objective account of women's emotions, assessing Indian womanhood's confrontation with male reality. Markandaya's attitude to feminism is established as personal, analytic and exploratory rather than public, political or polemical. As P. Geetha states, "Markandaya does not create a women's world but she presents the real world, sometimes raising serious question on attitude to men, women and marriage. She investigates the actual, social and emotional binds that shackle women" (10).

Indian women in Markandaya's novels define herself by a set of relationship and modes of conduct created within a society. Hence Markandaya confronts a tradition oriented society and learns to live under the twin whips of heritage. Kamala Markandaya herself seems to be conscious of the gender differences when she enters a journalist's career. She has a feminist dread that her domestic duties will trifle her literary career. She expressed this fear when she addressed the European branch of Accals in 1975 and mentioned that "the book appears one year later in a case of woman writer as she has also had to make some 1500 cups of tea and coffee in the mean time"(10).

Kamala Markandaya underlines the traditional attitude to women in her novel. Rukmani in *Nectar in a Sieve* after the birth of daughter feels that she has failed her husband, family and society because Indian society prioritizes the son In the tradition set by women novelist like Jane Austen, Markandaya also believes that truth about human relations can be best expressed in terms of social institution such as marriage and family. Marriage for Kamala Markandaya seems to be profound symbol of community and this phenomenon in her fiction has been the women's adventure, the object of her quest and her journey's end.

As aforementioned ornaments colour her novel with traditional attitude. Unlike her contemporary, Anita Desai, who presents women with fundamental problems and shows the predicament of woman not merely as wife or mother, Kamala Markandaya lets her women to have traditional beliefs as well as makes them face the modern predicament. Unlike Raja Rao who believes that "to be wife is to worship your man." Kamala Markandaya's heroines do not adore or worship their husbands though they respect to love them. What provides the feminist touch in her novels is her treatment of the women character. Markandaya makes her heroes quite bold and strong enough to face each and every kind of hazards and obstacles that come forth. By doing so, Markandaya does two works simultaneously. On the one hand, she erases the traditional negative image of women as Eve. On the other unravels the dignity and importance of womanhood in human existence. Her first novel, *Nectar in a Sieve* also dismantles the image of woman as something evil and tries to unravel the important role women have played in the family and society. As P. Geetha states about her writing:

The mythical pattern of woman as eve incarnate has been discarded and Kamala Markandaya idealizes her motherhood in her virgin novel but with a difference. *Nectar in a sieve* is the best example to illustrate the novelists instance. Rukmani seems to be the legend archetype of an ideal house wife but she also rises against the social forces confronting her remaining with their, in the sanctity of her home. (12)

Hence, Markandaya exposes the inherent woes of womanhood. She deals with modern and traditional characters. Her characters are also naive and dutiful wives who have not been imparted formal education. Markandaya always delineates women character form of static orthodox to the changing modern trends. Markandaya does so because she wants to create socially and timely approved image of women. That's why, we find the 'identify of women' as best expressed in terms of social institution such as marriage and family.

Markandaya through her writing, never tries to create obstacles on the flow of tradition. Commenting on this, Judith rightly states." Kamala Markandaya as a woman writer uses her text as part of continuing process of involving her own self-definition and her emphatic identification with her character" (20).

Markandaya's another novel *Some Inner furry* chronicles the tensions in three women's lives. She portrays tensions arising from uncertain political rather than economic circumstances. Here, Kamala Markandaya shows us money alone is not sufficient to ensure the happiness as the 'being of the women' concerned. The women here, Premela, Mira, Roshan are well-brought up and equipped in their own way with all the comforts of material prosperity. Yet self fulfillment remains hazardous for the poorer sisters.

Here, Markandaya chronicles the tensions of her protagonist illustrates her commitment to issues larger than private consciousness and women's grievances. Writing with a longing for moral coherence and transcending the barriers of sex, religion, politics and economic condition she shows us through Roshan that it is possible to reconcile the need of personal freedom with larger concept of national and eventually global freedom.

Literature, Markandaya points out, brings to us the elementary truth of human commonality and it enables us to develop "an instant neighbor" rather than confrontation of strange characters. To unravel the truth of her root, she presents the accounts of the poor peasant women as well as slum dweller. Her works of art linger with Markandaya aesthetic form and norms of reality. They are combined skillfully produce appropriate portrayal of the Indian women. Her women characters indicate to us the aspects that hinder the Indian women's program towards full hedged autonomy as well as the disillusionment is their ultimate lot and they have little to offer, either to themselves or to the world. In such context, it is remarkable most of them cling to the hope of the universal sisterhood for human being.

Markandaya thus is the chronicler of Indian women experience which leads us to believe in power of caring, and development of a universal fellow, a feeling of sistership with suffering of mankind. She aspects if Indian womanhood evolves toward this larger concept of love and caring, and then there wouldn't be fears about its endurance.

Novels: Multi Cultural Ethos

The interaction between East and West, especially, India on the one hand, and Britain, America and Europe, on the other, is recurring theme in Indo-English literature. The interaction of two different cultures is viewed from different perspectives by Indo-English writers, and possibilities of mutual understanding between the two sides have been explored in their works. The theme is given a rich variety of treatment in their poems, short stories, novels and dramatic works. Anita Desai, Manohar Malgonkar, Raja Rao, and Ruth Pravar Jhabvala are among the writers exploring the theme of cultural interaction in their works. Their main concern is the interaction caused by love, sex, marriage and the alien social milieu. They represent the problems and prospects of establishing intimate meaningful relationships between two racial and cultural groups.

Kamala Markandaya in the same manner presents the cultural interaction in her novels. Being the inhabitant of England, she truly captures the cultural dilemmas she depicts the problems of native Indian in a new culture and foreigners in Indian soil where her protagonists strive for an order, sometimes they succeed and most of the time the new culture, custom, language and value system of such society become hostile to them. Because of this hostility, they strongly feel the need of their home and native land. Undoubtedly Markandaya's the Eastern and Western protagonist's attempt to survive in a new land and simultaneously and at the other times the analogy of two cultures through the characters occupying two different cultural spaces.

Her novel the *Nowhere Man* takes up this theme further. The author is aware of the cruelties prepared in the name of imperialism. He condemns the British domination and the misery it entailed Srinivas and his wife Vasanta. They are forced to take up residence in England because their families were suspected being involved in terrorist activities against British rule in India. Their two sons are born in England, brought up there, the elder marries an English girl, the younger dies fighting for England hit by a German. Vasanta, grown in England, dies of consumption and the lonely, alienated Srinivas is brought back to the main stream of life through the Canny, he receives kind help and proper guidance from Mrs Pickening as equally old and destitute but English lady. In spite of living in England for half a century, Srinivas is the victim of racial prejudice. Hence, the novel shows us the reaction of Britishers to the inflow of coloured immigrants.

The very theme of cultural interaction is clearly depicted in her another novel, *Two virgins* which shows the life style of growing sisters in a small village. We learn a great deal about what the fabric of life means to the Indian women into adulthood. The author portrays the questing outward of the two sisters, their lives are shaped by the influence of their childhood environment. They move beyond home and the village. They don't want to be roofed in by the familiar environment, and the familiar emotions. They strive towards the city, the larger life beyond the unknown. They want to feel freedom. In imposing upon them their growing awareness of their own sensibilities, the author shows us how they, though sisters under the same paternal roof develop differently. Saroja and Lalitha, the two sisters are constantly made to choose between eastern and western way of perceiving the world around.

Similarly, her present novel *Nectar in a sieve* is a fictional epic on the Indian life revealing a rich gamut of human experience. The entire novel is coloured with havocs of hunger, the evils of industrialization, the tension between the tradition and modernity .It is a woeful tale of the trials and tribulations of a peasant couple, Nathan and Rukmani. Through

their contact with the English missionary Kenny, the author brings out the opposite viewpoint of the simple and fatalistic creatures of the soil, who have been nourished on the noble ideals of liberalism and of foreigner Kenny who is and great humanitarian. It is because of his pity for the poverty stricken and suffering people of India, he has left his country, wife and children.

II. Cross-Cultural Interaction Culture

The term culture has by now acquired a certain aura of ill-repute in social anthropological circles because of the multiplicity of its reference and the studied vagueness with which it has all too often been invoked. In any case, the cultural concept to which this thesis will refer to has neither multiple referents nor any usual ambiguity. It will denote to historically transmitted pattern of meaning codified in symbols. This system of inherited conceptions is expressed in symbolic forms by means of which human beings communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge and attitudes towards life. Culture and social structure are then different abstractions from the same phenomena.

The idea of culture as people's 'whole way of life' first arose in the late 18th century. Culture for Mathew Arnold was the best that has been 'thought and known' in the world. Along Arnoldian line, E. B. Tylor defined culture in an ethnographic way. Tylor was more original in his definition of culture. For Tylor, "culture or civilization taken in it's wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by a man as a member of a society" (1).

By the mid 20th century such ethnographic definition/concept of culture has undergone massive change. Raymond Williams contrasts this anthropological meaning of culture, denoting the whole way of living of a people, with the normative meaning of culture. In the normative usage, culture still claims to be the organic voice of people. Out of this conflict between culture in anthropological sense and culture in normative sense, there emerged a third way of using the term, "one that refers neither to a people's organic way of life nor to the normative values preached by leading intellectuals but to a battle ground of social conflicts and contradictions" (Graf and Bruce 421). From the theoretical perspective one can not assume a single, central culture that renders individual experience coherent and

meaningful, for it is inescapably different, divisive and dissonant.

The emergence and dissemination of postcolonial criticism and the theoretical development of the postcolonial theoretical discourse, made culture a most contested space. Culture by now borrowed the terminologies of other field of criticism. Often cited terminologies, these days in the study of culture are Michael Foucault's notion of 'Power' and 'Discourse' and Antonio Gramsci's concept of 'Hegemony'. Post colonial perspective emerged from the colonial testimony of Third World countries and the discourses of 'minorities' within the geopolitical division of east and west north and south. They formulate their revisions around issues of cultural difference, social authority, and political discrimination in order to reveal the antagonistic and ambivalent moments within the 'rationalizations' of modernity. Postcolonial criticism bears witness to these unequal and uneven forces of cultural representation involved in the contest for political and social authority within the modern world order. It forces us to engage with culture as an uneven, incomplete production of meaning and value often composed of incommensurable demands and practices produced in the act of social survival. Culture reaches out to create a symbolic textuality, to give the alienating everyday an aura of selfhood, a promise of pleasure As Homi K Bhaba rightly observes:

Culture as a strategy of survival is both transnational and translational. It is transnational because contemporary postcolonial discourses are deeply rooted in specific histories cultural displacement ... It is translational because such spatial histories of displacement... Make the question of how culture signifies, or what is signified by culture, rather complex issue. (438)

The transnational dimension of cultural transformation-migration, Diasporas, displacements, relocation-makes the process of cultural translation a complex form of

signification. It is from this hybrid location of cultural value- the transnational as the translational –that postcolonial intellectual attempts to elaborate a historical and literary project.

Edward W. Said is interested in studying the relationship between the East and West, which is governed by discourse, from the cultural dimension standing in position of a cultural critic rather than a radical political theorist. On the one hand, he sees the 'scope of orientalism' as matching 'the scope of empire, on the other hand he focuses the culture representing as well as functioning as a form of hegemony. Said in this connection finds Mathew Arnold as using culture as a powerful means of differentiation. Culture is an ideal for Arnold but Said argues, “Culture with its superior position has the power to authorize, to dominate, to legitimize, denote, interdict, and validate; in short i. e. the power of culture to be an agent of and perhaps the main agent of powerful differentiation within its domain and beyond it too” (Said 9).

Culture, for Said, is not only the positive doctrine of the best that is thought and known but also a differently negative doctrine of all that is not best. This double faceted view of culture makes one aspect of culture more powerful than the other. Culture, thus, becomes a powerful means of domination and appropriation.

Thus it can be said that culture is a concept that includes a refining and elevating element, each society's reservoir of the best that has been known and thought, as Mathew Arnold put it in the 1860s. In time culture comes to be associated, often aggressively, with the nation or the state, which differentiates 'us' from 'them' almost always with some degree of 'xenophobia'. Culture, in this sense, is a source of identity, and a rather combative entity. Culture is a sort of theater where various political and ideological causes engage one another. Far from being a placid realm of 'Apollonian gentility', culture can even be a battleground.

Cultural Identity

Identity has become the central area of concern in cultural studies during the 1990s. Identities as perceived within the domain of cultural studies are not things which exist. They have no essential or universal qualities. Rather they are discursive construction, the product of discourses or regulated ways of speaking about the world. In other words identities are constructed, made rather than found, by representations. In Balibar's words "Identity is never a peaceful acquisition; it is claimed as a guarantee against a threat of annihilation that can be figured by "another identity" or by an "erasing of identities" (Barker 186).

Every identity that is proclaimed is elaborated as a function of the other. It would be more precise to say that identity is a discourse of tradition. It is a 'production' which is never complete, always in process and constituted within, not outside representation. Hall argues that there are at least two different ways of thinking about cultural identity. The first position defines 'cultural identity' in terms of one shared culture a sort of collective, 'one true self' which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common within the terms of this definition as Hall argues: "Cultural identities reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide us, as own people, with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning" (111). Cultural identity along with the points of similarity also has the critical points of deep and significant difference which constitute what we really are or rather what we have become. One can't speak for a long time with any exactness about one experience one identity without acknowledging its other side. Such is the second notion of cultural identity for Hall. Hall argues:

Cultural identity in the second sense is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'. It belongs to the future as much as the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture... Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But

like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. (112)

Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialized past, identities are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power. Far from being grounded in mere 'recovery' of the past, which is to be found, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within the narratives of the past. Indian experience, Indianness, Africanness, Carribeanness, and other such identities are constituted out of the traumatic character of the colonial experience. The way in which these identities are subjected and positioned in the dominant regimes of representatives were the effects of a critical exercise of cultural power and normalization. The dominant or superior culture has the power to influence or dominate the other.

Nevertheless this idea of otherness as an inner compulsion changes our conception of 'cultural identity'. In this perspective Hall writes cultural identity is not a fixed essence at all, lying unchanged outside history and culture. Further it is not some universal and transcendental spirit inside on which history has made no fundamental mark. Thus, identity is not 'once and for all' nor is a fixed origin on which we can make some final and absolute return. Of course, identity is not a mere fantasm either. It is something which has histories or past which continuously speaks to us. Identities are constructed through memory, fantasy, narrative and myth. Cultural identities, thus, are the points of identification, the unstable points of identification or future, which are made, within the discourse of history and culture. Not an essence but a 'positioning' where there is always a politics of identity, a politics of position which has no absolute guarantee in an unproblematic, transcendental 'law of origin'.

The birth of dissemination of democratic politics of modernity and with the rise of postcolonial theory, aggressive assertions of cultural identity along with wider international solidarities finally made these larger and more expansive solidarities more compelling than

those of national culture. National consciousness paved the way for emergency of an ethnically and politically enlightened global community. The consciousness of self, Fanon writes, “is not the closing of a door to a communication... National consciousness, which is not nationalism, is the only thing that will give us an international dimension” (Fanon 199).

After colonialism, there emerged a new transformation of social consciousness, which exceed the rectified identities and rigid boundaries invoked by national consciousness. In other words; post colonialism, facilitate the emergence of what Said called an enlightened 'postcolonialism' where there is the possibility of a more generous and pluralistic vision of the world. Post nationalism pursues various indeterminacies in the colonial encounter in order to bridge the world divided between westerner and native which is done through a considerably less embattled account of colonialism by depicting how the colonial encounter contributed to the mutual transformation of colonizer and colonized. The phenomena is viewed as a transformation as an interactive, dialogic, two-way process rather than a simple active-passive one, as a process involving complex negotiation and exchange. Because of the globalization process set in motion by modern imperialism in this ‘postnational’ era, each society is carrying the ‘melting-pot’ syndromes. Though many marginalized writers have been trying to create their own independent identity preserving the past and assimilating the present through multiple ways.

Acculturation

Acculturation is one of the prominent modes of cultural interaction in the context of shifting global tendencies. It refers to that process where diverse cultural traits and complexities are modified because of the continuous contact by making the cultures and cultural identities hybrid and the society-multicultural. Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which results when groups of individuals having different culture come into contact for a long time, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either one

or both groups. The history of each society is characterized by a set values beliefs and practices and each culture has a codified exhaustive set of instructions concerning behavioral issues. Cultural interactions stem from the prolonged contact between two or more sets of values, norms which can be extremely different from one another and such contacts may extend "from domestic contacts to global interactions", and "between hegemonic western culture and developing non western societies" (Dallmayr 14).

This can be the result in cooperation or competition between cultures. In the first case exchange and mutual support can take place while in the second case hostility and conflict may arise. The second alternative is the most frequent one. Acculturation only seldom occurs as a bi-directional process. More often, cultural modification concerns the change a cultural group has to introduce in collective as well as individual behavior, in order to coexist and interact with the norms and habits of a dominant social system. It usually applies to ethnic minority's immigrants, indigenous people exposed to colonization, refugees, which can be globally considered as acculturating groups. Because of the involuntary character of the acculturation process minorities are mostly forced to adapt to the cultural system they live in, in order to cope with the dominant environment and become active part in it.

People belonging to the acculturating minority maintain strong relationship within their group. They keep their own traditions, behaviors, and values. They create a separate sub-culture, which is minimally influenced by the dominant group. In such situation the contacts between the social systems are subsequently very restricted. Individuals originating from the acculturating group are not accepted as member of the dominant culture. They are marginalized or segregated by the dominant group regardless of their wish to integrate and/or to assimilate. Acculturating individuals manage to acquire values and behaviors characterizing the dominant culture in which they live, at the same time preserving their own traditions and habits. This kind of interactions with a dominant culture has also been labeled

as 'biculturalism'.

A bicultural individual knows and understands two different cultures and he/she is able to show dual modes of social behavior that can be alternatively used depending upon which culture the individual is interacting with. But it does not necessarily mean that a bicultural individual daily comes into contact with the dominant culture, nor that the two cultures share a common geographical area. But bicultural competence is a laborious task. It requires the creation of effective interpersonal relationships without losing personal identity. It implies knowledge of the dominant language, sense of being grounded in both cultures. Not everyone is able to acquire this competence.

However, the effort an individual has to perform in the acculturation process is too often not rewarded. In several cases integration remains a remote goal or even an unrealistic ideal. It is very difficult to estimate the intrinsic absolute value of one cultural system as compared with others. As a matter of fact, depending on the historical period and the geographical locations, each model of social structure offers some advantages and imposes some constraints on individuals.

Dislocation

Modern society has witnessed a number of international ruptures and fragmentation in cultures. Dislocation as phenomenon is the consequences of willing or unwilling movement from known to unknown location. The very term dislocation is defined in key concepts in post-colonial studies in this way:

A term for both the occasion of displacement that occurs as a result of imperial occupation and the experiences associated with this event.

The phenomenon may be a result of transportation from one country to another by slavery or imprisonment, by invasion or settlement, a consequences of willing or unwilling from a known to unknown

location. The term is used to describe the experiences of those who have willingly moved from the imperial 'Home' to the colonial margin, but it affects all those who, as a result of colonialism, have been placed in a location that, because of colonial hegemonic practices, needs, in a sense, to be 'reinvented' in language, in narrative and in myth. (Ashcroft, 73)

Diasporic communities formed by forced or voluntary migration may all be affected by this process of dislocation and regeneration. Dislocation in different sense is also a feature of all invaded colonies where indigenous or original cultures are often dislocated, if not annihilated. At best, they are metaphorically, placed into a hierarchy. This hierarchy ignores its institutions and values in favour of the values and practices of the colonizing culture.

Dislocation can also be extended further to include the psychological and personal dislocation resulting from cultural denigration as well as voluntary chosen status Dislocation is a structure which is characterized by never ending process as the no single articulating or organizing principle; rather constantly being dislocated by force outside it.

Nation and National Identity

It is difficult to make a universal consensus about what a nation is. Arising in the late eighteenth century and particularly in the French Revolution, the political theory of nation was developed by Diderot and Condorcet. They defined nation as "a union of individuals governed by one law and represented by the same law giving assembly" (Qtd. James Snead 231). A nation is collection of individuals united in supporting a perceived interest.

Germanic invasions in the fifth century AD up until the final Norman conquests in the tenth century introduce in the world the principle which later on was to serve as basis for the existence of the nationalities. Norman Conquest consolidated patriotic feeling. The essence of nation is that all individuals have things in common and also that they have forgotten many

things. For Renan, ethnographic principle which is substituted for a national one is a great error. He writes: "Ethnographic considerations...have played no part in the constitution of modern nations. France is [at once] Celtic, Iberic, and Germanic. Germany is Germanic, Celtic and Slav. Italy is the country where the ethnographic argument is most confounded" (14).

There is no pure race and that to make politics depend upon ethnographic analysis is to surrender it to a chimera. The powerful countries such as England, America, France and Italy are those where the blood is the most mixed. Race is something which is made and unmade in long run history. The politics based on racial hatred and ethnographic sentiment is no way a stable thing. About nation Renan further writes:

The nations are not something eternal. They have their beginnings and they will end. A European Confederation will very probably replace them. But such is not the law of the century in which we are living. At the present time, the existence of nations is the good thing, a necessity even. Their existence is guarantee of liberty which would be lost if the world had only one law and only one master. (20)

We live in the world obsessed with national pride. The world is rampant with boundary wars, and the felling of nationalism, on the banners of countless parties. No manner how conflicting their place and destination is. Nation is myth, acts as a character for the present -day social order. It supplies a retrospective pattern of moral values, sociological order and magical belief. The function of such things is to strengthen tradition and endow it with a greater value and prestige by tracing it back to a higher, better and more supernatural reality and initial events.

The British cultural historian, Raymond Williams says: "... the modern nation state is entirely artificial" (Qtd. Brennan 45). A nation like an individual is the culmination of a long

past of endeavor, sacrifice and devotion. It is a large-scale solidarity, constituted by the felling of sacrifices that one has made in the past and of those that one is prepared to make in the past and of those that one is prepared to make in the future. It presupposes a past.

It is especially in the third world fiction after the second world war that the fictional uses of nation and nationalism are most pronounced. The nation is a discursive formation. It is not simply an allegory or imaginative vision but a gestative political structure which the third world artist is consciously building or suffering the lack of it. Nationalism is a trope for such things as belonging, bordering and commitment.

Race, geography, tradition, language, size or some combination of these seem finally insufficient for determining national essence and yet people die for nations, fight wars for them and write fictions on their behalf.

Nations are imaginary constructs that depend for their existence on an apparatus of cultural fictions in which imaginative literature plays a decisive role. By using national allegories national narratives were and are written to provide legitimacy to the idea of nation as an essence. Many of the novels often attempt to assemble the fragments of a national life and give them a final shape. They become documents designed to prove national consciousness with myriad components that display an active communal life. We undoubtedly find narration at the centre of nation. Stories of national origin, myths of founding fathers and genealogies of her come under the national narrative. At the origin of the nation, we find the story of nation's origin. In contrast to this tendency, writers like Kamala Markandaya cross the boundary of nationality and project the characters who as an alter ego of the novelists, show transnational attitude.

The nations were and are profoundly unstable formations, always likely to collapse back into the subdivisions of clan, tribe, language or religious group. Nations are not natural entities. The instability of the nation is the inevitable consequence of its nature as social

construction. The process of globalization requires that the individual be free to act in an economic realm that crosses and nullifies these national boundaries and identities. The link between nation and expansion is much older. The emergence of the nation-state and the imperial –capitalist economies of post –renaissance Europe are inseparable. During and after the discovery of the new world, long –distanced –trading ventures developed in the renaissance period. The trade generated further demands for manufacture, and the raw materials for this expansion were supplied by the new economies of the colonized world in the form of plantations and mines which fuelled the industrialization of Europe.

The French orientalist Earnest Renan noted that nations emerged only after the classical and medieval idea of an empire had broken down. Ironically, it was the newly emerged nations of the post- renaissance world that initiated the new colonizing form of the nineteenth century imperialism. Imperialism now became an extension into the wider world of the ideology of a nation formation based on the unifying signifiers of language and race. The imperialism of the second half of the nineteenth century was expression of need to generate unifying cohesive myths within the complex and heterogeneous realities of the late nineteenth century nation-states to prevent the reemergence of order divisions based on earlier conceptions of the 'nation' or to resist the emergence of internal divisive forces based on theories of class.

Anti-colonial movements employed the idea of a pre-colonial past not to reconstruct pre-colonial social state but to generate support for the construction of postcolonial nation-states based upon the European nationalist model.

Postcolonial states incorporated models and institutions based on the European concept of nation created the continuing linkages that allowed the neocolonialist control of these states to operate so effectively. The use of nationalist myths and sentiments to control, suppress and discriminate against minority groups within many postcolonial states has been

the subject of much recent comment. These groups claim their distinctive place and argue for a greater tolerance and acceptance of cultural diversity.

Hegemony and Discourse

Hegemony is now generally understood to mean domination by consent. This broader meaning was coined and popularized in the 1930s by Italian Marxist, Antonio Gramsci. He investigated why the ruling class was successful in promoting its own interests in society. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin in the book *Key Concept in Post-colonial Studies* write:

Fundamentally, hegemony is the power of the ruling class to convince other classes that their interests are the interests of all. Domination is thus exerted not by force, nor even necessarily by active persuasion, but by a more subtle and inclusive power over presented as the common interest and thus comes to be taken for granted. (116)

Hegemony is an acceptance of imperial domination as natural process. Hegemony is important because the capacity to influence the thought of the colonized is by far the most sustained and potent and operation of imperial power in colonized regions.

Consent is achieved by the interpellation of the colonized subject by imperial discourse. So that Euro-centric values, assumption, beliefs and attitudes are accepted as a matter of course as the most natural or valuable. The inevitable consequence of such interpellation is that the colonized subject understands itself as peripheral to those Euro-centric values, while at the same time accepting their centrality.

Hegemony and discourse are repeatedly deployed in cultural studies. The process of making, maintaining and reproducing ascendant meaning and practices has been called hegemony. Hegemony implies a situation where powerful groups exercise social authority and leadership over subordinate groups through the winning of consent. The production of

consent implies popular identification with the cultural meaning generated by the signifying practices of hegemonic discourse. The concept of discourse suggests not simply the written word, though it is one of its senses, but all practices which signify something. This includes the generation of meaning through images, sounds, objects and cultural activities such as dance and sport. Since images, sounds, objects and practices are sign systems, which signify with the same mechanism as a language. We may refer to them as discourse.

Identities are not things which exist permanently. They have no essential or universal qualities. Rather they are discursive constructions, the product of discourses or regulated ways of speaking about the world. In other words, identities are made rather than found, by representation, notably discourse. In the book *Cultural studies* Chris Baker, concerning discursive practices comments on Foucault:

Foucault argues against structuralist theories of language which conceive of it as an autonomous rule –governed system. He also opposes interpretive or hermeneutic methods which seek to disclose the hidden meanings of language. Foucault is thus concerned with the description and analysis of the surface of discourse and their effects under determinate material and historical conditions. For Foucault discourse concerns both language and practice and refers to the regulated production of knowledge through which gives meaning to both material objects and social practices. (19-20)

Discourse is the system of statements within which the world can be known. It is the system by which dominant groups in society constitute the field of truth by imposing specific knowledge, disciplines and values upon dominated ones .Discourse constructs, defines and produces the object of knowledge in an intelligible way which at the same time excludes other ways of reasoning as unintelligible. There can be no truths, subjects or identities outside

of language which doesn't have stable referents and is therefore unable to represent fixed truths or identities. Truth and identity are not fixed universal but description in language which through social convention comes to be counted as truth. Truth is temporary stabilization of meaning. Discourse is a social formation.

The concept of discourse was originally used from about the sixteenth century to describe any kind of speaking, talk or conversation. It became increasingly used to describe a more formal speech, a narration or treatment of any subject at length, a treatise, dissertation or sermon. In current use, discourse, knowledge and power are interrelated. If a discourse is not controlled, it may represent a very great threat to the authority of the discourse. It continues reality not only for the objects it appears to represent but also for the subject who formulate it. Colonial discourse is the complex structure of signs and practices that organize social existence and social reproduction within colonial relationship. Colonial discourse constructs the colonizing subject as much as the colonized. Discourse is important because it joins power and knowledge together. Those who have power have the control of what is known and the way it is known. Those who have knowledge have the power over those who do not. This link between knowledge and power is particularly important in the relationship between colonizers and colonized. Truth is the question not of true discovery but of the construction of interpretation about the world which are taken to be true. Truth is not a collection of facts, for there can be only interpretation and there is no limit to the ways in which the world can be interpreted. Truth has an historical purchase. It is the consequence of power. People, who hold power, formulate discourses. Discourses are instruments to practice hegemony especially on the part of colonizers over colonized.

Moreover, the issue like how colonial discourse operates and what is decolonization will be discussed. European colonialism in the post – renaissance world became a sufficiently specialized and historically specific form of imperial expansion to justify its current general

usage as a distinctive kind of political ideology. Denoting different forms of colonialism Chris Barker writes, "Colonial control manifested itself as military dominance, cultural ascendancy and the origins of economic dependency. Occupied lands were converted into protected markets for imperial powers as well as sources of materials" (116).

The European post –renaissance colonial expansion was accelerated with the development of modern capitalist system of economic exchange. New colonies were established to provide raw materials for the bourgeoning economies of the colonial powers. The relation between the colonizer and colonized was locked into a rigid hierarchy of difference whether economic, cultural or social. The idea of the ‘evolution mankind’ and ‘survival of fittest’ race in the crude application of social Darwinism went hand in hand with the doctrines of imperialism that evolved at the end of the nineteenth century.

Cultural diversity avoids universal prescriptive of cultural definitions. Ambivalence is implicit in all colonial discourse. The structuralist critic Saussure suggested that signs acquire meaning through their difference from other signs. The same notion can be applied even in culture. A culture may be identified by its difference from other cultures. Ambivalence itself is the space in which cultural meanings and identities always contain the traces of other meanings and identities .Homi K. Bhaba argues: “Claims to inherent originality or purity of cultures are untenable, even before we resort to empirical historical instances that demonstrate their hybridity” (Qtd. Ashcroft 61). Colonialism made a mixture of people from various backgrounds. People residing in multicultural location are confused about their association with a single and specific cultural paradigm.

The process of decolonization started quite later. Decolonization denotes to democratize culture, recuperate and reevaluate it. The continuing influences of Euro- centric cultural models privileged the imported over the indigenous: colonial language over local languages, writing over orality and linguistic culture over inscriptive culture of other kinds.

Dance and graphic culture had often been designated as folk culture. A majority cultures had been invaded and suppressed or denigrated by colonialist practices. At present, the process of resisting and overthrowing their assumption has been more obviously active. The process of decolonization started to be rapid and it is still continuing. Writers from the part of the world such as Michael Ondaatje, Salman Rushdie, V.S. Naiupal and Kamala Markandaya embrace a transitional identity and seek to critique the contemporary postcolonial state. They are often dismissed as not contributing to a decolonizing process. Decolonization, whatever else it may be, is a complex and continuing process rather than something achieved automatically at the moment of independence. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Hellen Tiffin write:

Decolonization includes dismantling the hidden aspects of those institutional and cultural forces that had maintained the colonialist power and remain even after political independence is achieved.

Initially in many places in the colonized world, the process of resistance was conducted in terms of institutions appropriated from the colonizing culture itself. (63)

Decolonization does not operate only at the level of politics though it may be preliminary. The promise of complete decolonization is not possible because culture in postcolonial scenario can not affirm indigenous purity. Certainly, the natives strive and effort to preserve their originality.

III. Cross-cultural Interaction: Dialogue between Cultures

Every writer has his own vision which is peculiar and unique. His perspective is shaped by the experience he gets of the world around him. National ethos may also influence a writer's perception which is inextricably interwoven with its cultural heritage. Expatriate writers have the complex experience of coping with coalescing influences of their birth and the country of their choice. Their vision gets suitably modified by confluence of divergent cultures, of which they are the products. In a similar manner, Kamala Markandaya has made place in immigrant writing too. Born in India, married to an English, and currently settled in the US, the cross cultural background added to her first hand experiences as a marginal, living in another dominant society. These experiences accounts for the unmistakable stamp of authenticity in her novels.

Today, the world has become a global village and Diaspora experience has become a common form of experience, of migration or exile, generating fissured identities and hybridities alongside problems of dislocation and dispossession and a larger problem of a lost center. The writers including Kamala Markandaya articulate important question in her works regarding traditional culture system, material discords, collapse of the joint family, social, economic and cultural realities around her. Kamala Markandaya succeeds in effectively assimilating these realities and experiences into her writing. Multiplicity of thematic patterns and poly angular perspectives in her writing clearly bring forth the multicultural ethos that forms the basis of her writing.

Nectar in a sieve is a daring and colorful novel, in which Markandaya brings forth the two different cultures Indian and the Western. The protagonist of the novel is Rukamani, the youngest of the four daughters of once a powerful village headman. She is married to a poor farmer, Nathan whom she had never seen before. Since she is to quote her 'without dowry' (11). From the very beginning the match is said to be a poor one for Rukamani but, contrary

to all expectations. Here Markandaya reveals us how hierarchical is Indian society and how one's economic prosperity determines his life.

Similarly Rukmani is not shown as a rebel for Indian tradition. She follows the norms and values which society is laid down. She even never takes her husband's name. She says "my husband, whom I will call here Nathan for that, was his name, although in all the years I never called him that for it is not meeting for a woman to address her husband as husband"(4). Here the devotion of Rukmani to Nathan is very important because this relation is compared with the husband wife relation of Kenny. Rukmani is equally close to the nature with the murmuring of stream and chirping of the birds as she is preoccupied with Indian culture. Rukmani knows the fact that her dignity lies in native culture and she can't go away from it. She regards nature as God. Markandaya reveals the traditional bondage between entire peasantry and the nature itself though this relationship.

Another best example of Rukmani's inclination to western culture and faith in Indian tradition glimpses as she takes the risk of visiting a white doctor Kenny to beget a son. It is because of the Indian culture which insists on a son and takes as an agent to open the gate of heaven. Not only this before meeting Kenington, she puts on stone lingram, symbol of fertility. To strengthen this matter Madhumita Ghosal and Mehru M. Major write the birth of male child in Indian families has always been looked upon with happiness. Rukmani though represents traditional Indian woman but she possesses the new concept and knows well the need of education. Despite her keen interest in education, we come to know that she couldn't study because the economic condition of her father deteriorated.

Markandaya provides the strength of the knowledge both of tradition and modernity to Rukmani. Rukmani confronts a tradition- oriented society and learns to live under the twin whips whips of modernity. To support this point A.V. Krishna Rao writes, "Markandaya's contribution to Indo-Anglican fiction lies essentially in her capacity to explore...Vital,

formative areas of Individual consciousness that project the image of cultural change" (67). The very cultural change is because of the confrontation of Western culture by the indigenous Indian culture. Hence, Rukmani uses both traditional and modern solution to get sons. The friendship with Kenny not only rewards her sons and daughters but also paves the way to understand him inwardly.

Markandaya marks Rukmani not to have any revolutionary spirit against the white doctor. Instead she realizes well that Kenny has served her well leaving his own family and country. Rukmani believes the cost of his service can not be repaid and she can't reveal her gratification to him in words. That's why, she says "that my home is yours and all in it" (19). Presenting Rukmani dissatisfaction with Ira's barrenness, Markandaya further highlights Indian myth which seeks son as the right heir of the father.

Rukmani's regular visiting with Kenny slowly and gradually not only makes her digest the 'awe' and 'fear' with him but rather germinates her wishes to spend the moments of her life with him. She wants him to come under the roof of her home and spend some of his moment with her family members. As Kenny comes her home she bows her head at his feet and offers a straw carpet to sit on. This suggests how Indians treat to their guests. Rukmani knows that only Kenny could support her in every hazards of her life. At the same time, Rukmani wants her relation with Kenny to be secret. She wishes her husband not to know that she was putting herself in the hand of foreigners. She intends so because she is afraid of her society and Indian convention which does not allow her to keep the relationship with the other male especially with foreigner.

Markandaya has made Rukmani a very bold and powerful character. Though Rukmani is less educated but she has well perceived the division of society existing even in the rural India. She is also familiar with the exploitation made by the feudal lords to the farmers within the Indian society itself. We can find the revolutionary spirit always flowing

inside her. This could be easily felt in her remarks “there is a dislike of the money lending class among us” (23). It tells us how the domination of one social group to other exists in Indian society. Through the relationship of Old Granny, Biswas, we can feel how the economic disaster compels human beings to forget the sense of love and co-operation and mutuality. This instance persuades us to change our belief that lack of love and mutual understanding exists only in western society. It also tells us that human beings on earth are guided by the profit and money.

Rukmani is the representative character of rural Indian peasant life. Through her life and suffering, we preciously understand the various problems existing in peasant life. Most of the people like Rukmani and Nathan are landless. They have been compelled to work in others' land .They are threatened and misbehaved by the landlord. At the same time, Kenny becomes a support to ease their life. He helps at most of the crisis of Rukmani. Hence she regards him as god. She addresses him as “my lord, my benefactor many a time I have longed to see you .Now at last you come I bent down to kiss your feet” (31).Despite the western intellect she gets from the conversation with Kenny, Rukmani has inseparable relationship with Indian culture. She is worried about the marriage of her daughter Ira and the dowry needed in the very ceremony. She has saved the red sari for her daughter's marriage which she had worn in her own marriage. The hard times of her life begins when she has to feed her six children. The nature also deceives her. By presenting the deception from the side of nature, Markandaya indirectly appeals to Indians to be ready to face the required changes. Nathan and Rukmani suffer a lot because they are too conservative and lack the audacity to leave faith in the superstitions. But unknowingly believe that their identity lies within such superstitions. Kenny questions on the faith of Rukmani that time will be appropriate and all of us are in the hands of god. He tries to persuade her not to be in illusion the hope of blissful future but to shout for help to make their present easier. He says why do you not demand –

“cry out for help-do something? There is nothing in this country” (44). Rukmani contrarily doesn't allow herself to be the character of 'sympathy' rather she wants to face any hazards of life bravely.

Rukmani as an Indian mother is worried about her daughter. With the changing of time, Ira is married to a villager but she is also deceived by her own fate. Like her mother she couldn't offer a son to her husband. As she is forced to return her maternal house. When she comes to Rukmani, she is taken to Kenny for treatment. Though Ira is treated and gives birth to an albino son but only to see that her husband has married another woman. To feed her brother Kuti she is forced to sell her own body. Sometimes Rukmani is irritated and tensed by confronting all the pitiable condition of her children. This event of the novel is significant because it evidently reveals the terrible impact industrialization has caused in Indian villagers.

Markandaya has made her characters Nathan and Rukmani very liberal. Nathan is a farmer and sole feeder of his family. He loves land more than his soul. But Nathan never wants his sons Arjun and Thambi to be engaged in farming. Similarly Rukmani knows her life is confined within the domestic walls and fields. She knows that the farmer not only struggle for their belly but also fulfill the requirements of their landlords. She has also realized that her peasant group doesn't ask for charity but for which their due is. But the landlord will not allow taking even their own portion. That's why she accepts her sons to be the laborers in the construction led by Kenny leaving their tradition agriculture. Even though the couple realizes that is to surrender their ego and be the servant of 'other'. This tells us the development of attitude to their traditional profession among Indians.

Through the relationship between Rukmani and Kenny, Markandaya unravels the universal pain, suffering, hazards and human incapability to fight with the difficulties of life. Kenny outwardly seems to be very gentle, prosperous and happy but inwardly he is totally

tormented and deceived by his own life. He is compelled to leave usual encumbrances men have-wife, children and home. Markandaya tells us that all these things are the essence of life for Rukmani. Kenny takes those contrarily as the obstacles of individual freedom. When he gets freedom from such bondages, he thinks himself to be the master of his desire.

Confidently, he says “I work among you when my spirit wills it...I go when I am tired of your follies and stupidities, your eternal shameful poverty” (71). But quite oppositely, Rukmani survives looking at the face of her family members. The juxtaposition of eastern and western attitude regarding the family makes us how the familial bondage and its necessity has been understood differently by westerners and easterners.

Rukmani never thinks to sell her body to solve the need of her stomach. She knows “Kunti’s painted mouth and scented thighs had held so many men” (82). Rukmani knows Kunti had sold her body in compulsion. That’s why she doesn’t speak directly to her. Both Nathan and Rukmani know that their daughter Ira adopts the same profession like Kunti. Like Kunti for her family, Ira becomes the feeder and protecting figure for her brother. The death of their son Raja brings along with the prostitution of Ira and Kunti reveals the very catastrophic situation and a number of sinister consequences in their family given by the tannery of Industrialization and urbanization.

Markandaya shows the separation, hatred, cruelty, decadence in the family members as universal attributes existing everywhere in the world no matter whether in the western society or eastern. Kenny, a western doctor has been unable to understand the misunderstanding existing with in his family. His life becomes ideal to the villagers like Rukmani and Nathan. He has come to India with the intention to help poor, needy and those who sought help from him. But he himself is so poor for love of his son, daughter, and wife that nobody can return him the lost love. He is alienated from his own country on the one hand he is isolated from familial ties one the other because he knows that his wife has already

left him and his sons are taught to forget him. However Kenny lives by wiping the tear of Indians and trying to be a ray of hope for them though he is the real sufferer in an alien cultural milieu.

Rukmani is very enthusiastic to know the prosperity, success the westerners have made. Her keen mind doesn't delay to ask the question to Kenny. He responds to the fact whatever money is collected doesn't belong to him only. He reveals the fact that the money collected to serve them was partly by the people of his country and partly by the people of her country. He also adds that his people make the fund because they have 'understood the need', 'suffering of the poor'. They are very much sympathetic to Indian. They don't like Indian children to die on the streets because there is no hospital. They don't like the poor to cry on the street. Kenny also says that the native must cry for the help. But Rukmani doesn't want to shout for the help forgetting their ego and identity. She realizes well that appeal for help is to deceive their own culture. She says "we would be pitiable creature indeed so weak ...for our wants; they are many and unfulfilled, for who is rich and compassionate as to supply them" (113). Rukmani shows her strong inclination to native culture. She shows her confidence that they are habituated in sorrows because their priests have taught them that suffering cleansed their soul. Unlike Kenny, Rukmani sees more in the relationship between man and woman. She interprets their relationship as something 'spiritual' and eternal not merely temporal or physical. Definitely, she believes a man takes it with passion. At the same time she knows that it is his nature not any kind of domination because he remains always gentle to her. For her a man gives them as much as he takes when he plays 'the fire of breast, on the on bared thigh on thigh.' She believes that man provides a seed to a woman which he will see her fruitful. He watches day by day his child growing within her. Hence she firmly but quite contradictorily states Kenny that the man and woman relation is beyond the surgical experience but tomorrow next year and eternity.

The rays of hope in Rukmani's villagers that they will get the job to solve their daily needs, they will be treated when they fall sick, sparkles when Kenny and his companions start construction hospital in the village. Rukmani's son Selvam gets the job under that construction. Despite her saying he has ceased to belong to their family, he has started to spend his time with Kenny. He is totally detached from his family. But she is content seeing the knowledge and the experiences he has acquired by Kenny. Rukmani has the potentiality to understand the lacks and gaps in her village. Hence she says that the cause of Old Granny's death is lack of health facilities in her village. She also reveals the fact that it was because of the delay in the construction of hospital, Old Granny was pushed into the mouth of death because she couldn't get the treatment in time. But at the same time, Rukmani goes beyond the mere criticism of westerners but rather contemplates human suffering and weaknesses as the universal one. She unravels the fact that no one in the world is capable to help and understand others problem. Realizing this fact, she stops herself questioning on such matter and searching for the person who can feed others by kicking his/her own belly.

Rukmani after being landless, she thinks of her another son, Murgan, who is the servant of a rich person in the city. Murgan in the novel is another victim of industrialization and urbanization. In the courses of time, Nathan is affected by rheumatism. Rukmani lacks the support to sustain her life. They are even deceived by the harvest. The little income of her another son, Selvam, could not solve even their minute problem. Rukmani knows the fact they can lead a life from the tenant farming till the time they have their strength in their in their body but nobody can get support from the tenant farming in his/her old age .Here we can realize her rage towards this traditional kind of agricultural system flowing inside her when she says "my sons had left because it frowned on them one of them had been destroyed by its ruthlessness."(134). Rukmani doesn't think this is the problem of her family only. But

there are whole Indian peasant families which have been suffered from such deception of nature.

Rukmani on her way remembers almost all the incidents she had experienced in the village. She remembers the kind guardian Kenny who used to help her in every hazards and difficulties of her life. She remembers her beloved green field once again her daughter's and Sacrabani's face comes into her mind. Despite of her desire to be in the midst of Kenny, villagers and green field, she keeps her journey to the city through the dusty road. She is in the hope that, Selvam will support them, nourish them and bring smile on their old lips. But this fragile hope is overshadowed when she confronts the city Rukmani suffers much on the way to their destiny to get son's address. In the night, the poor couple was forced to take shelter in a temple as the hope of getting free meal. But later on, Rukmani herself comes to know that there was no little care but too many thieves and pickpockets. Next morning, Rukmani loses her goods as well as the little money she had. The poor, innocent folk Rukmani and Nathan fall into the trap of cruel city life. By presenting Rukmani's money stolen in the temple, Markandaya reveals the absence of morality, humanity, religiosity in the city more shamefully in the temple.

Rukmani knows the suffering of the city when she sees the various scenes over there. She sees a group of boys playing in the corner of the city. They were dodging in and out of the traffic. From their appearance, it looked as if they have never eaten a full in their lives. After contemplating such situation, Rukmani relates her own fate with the fate of those children. All of them were extremely dirty with the dust of roadside and the filth deposited on it. The boys had running sores. Their bodies were clogged with mud where blood and pus had exuded. But despite such pain and suffering, Markandaya shows these children playing happily and friendly. But this relationship doesn't last long when they find a piece of bread or a sweet thrown on the street. The childishness is lost, all play is forgotten at that time, and

they fight ferociously in the dust for the duty to solve the hunger of their belly. With this instance, Markandaya tries to unravel how the city kills the sense of brotherhood, fraternity and harmony.

Among those boys, a boy named Puli builds intimacy with them. He is the character who is physically deformed in the story but very pure and genuine in his heart. Puli helps them to find out the doctor's house in Koli Street where the old couple's son Murgan had been supposed to work. Puli is definitely a kind, co-operative and helpful boy who has been the victim in an urbanized world. But he is quite happy in his struggle in his life. Though he is very young regarding his age but contradictorily he is quite bold, matured enough in relation with the experience he has gathered in the city. It is because of such dignity, he claims to be 'the king of animals' and the 'leader of his pack'. The question arises why does Markandaya present such a diseased and poverty stricken character like Puli. For this, Markandaya herself says:

Clean out of the entire cluster of distorted and distorting imagery with which we have lumbered ourselves, through the concern literature which brings to us the elementary truths of human commonality so that we find we have an instant neighbor rather than strange characters marked them. (176)

The frustration and mental torture rises up when they couldn't find Murgan even in doctor's house. They keep on waiting for the arrival of the doctor with the thin hope of getting some information about their son. The doctor comes and treats them sympathetically but she can't put the medicine properly in the wounds of the old couple. Though she fulfills temporarily the physical hunger of their belly by providing them food but not their spiritual hunger the search of their son because the doctor tells that Murgan had left her house before

two years ago. However, the doctor consoles Rukmani and Nathan by saying the possible address where Murgan might be found.

With the thin hope of getting their son, both of them go to the collector's house in Chaumandi Hill. Poor couple at first they are treated badly by the gate keeper. But later on, as they reveal their real grief in front the gate keeper, he becomes a little bit sympathetic towards them. He says that he had not known any Murgan but as the collector arrives they are taken to their daughter in law, Ammu. Rukmani and Nathan see a thin woman with the untidy hair. She had been carrying a baby at her hip. The baby had been staring at the couple. Both of them were shocked after seeing such pathetic condition of their blood. When they come to the room they find nothing except some pots.

The children seem so thin that it was obvious that they hadn't got sufficient food. Suddenly, Rukmani inquires about her son but feels bitter because Amm tells her that he had left her two years ago. She further states that it was unknown where he had gone. Rukmani as a fatalist blames her own fate and says 'we gave him life, we should have taught him better; yet looking back it was difficult to see how and where the mistake had been made.'

(162). This serious contemplation is distracted as Amm says that she had to go to her work leaving them alone in the room. Nathan and Rukmani remain silent and simply look at each other's face. However, Ammu prepares the rice after returning from the work. But the old couple is quite clear through her behavior that they have become the burden for her. They are totally 'alienated' from their own kin. But we can realize that Rukmani isn't angry with her daughter in law's behavior because she knows the problem of Ammu that she had nothing to feed them. It was beyond her ability to keep them with her and look after them. That's why both of them make a decision and leave Ammu and her children. At the time of departure, Rukmani looks again at the face of grand child who was the part of themselves. Ammu comes to the door and wishes them to reach the home safely. Here, we can feel that the soft

heart of Ammu has been hardened because of the question to survive and fulfillment of the belly. She couldn't perform her duty and responsibilities towards her elders because she can't feed them.

The life of old villagers on the street and temple once again begins. Cursing their own fate, Rukmani and Nathan return to the temple on the hope of getting free meal but they are mistreated there. Other people who had been living there in the temple since before become jealous of them because their food is going to be divided. All of them start looking at them with their antagonistic eyes. The compulsion to live in the hatred and isolation breeds the distress towards the city life and the longing to return to their country. Nathan says to Rukmani it is better to starve where he was born than live there. Though both of them wanted to return to their village but they didn't have required money. Rukmani remembers of her bygone days and finds the cause of hazard in every step of life is money. She shows her anger to the materialistic world, "Wide, wide world but as narrow as the coins in your hands like a tethered goat, so far and no farther, only money can make the rope stretch, only money" (167).

Rukmani in the midst of chaos prepares a plan to earn money. She starts a job of reading and writing letter. She spends the whole day in the corner of the street shouting so that the people would come and make her write and read the letter. She can't earn more than two anas which she spends to buy a rice cake for them. The season changes and her husband starts to suffer from rheumatism. The old bouts of fever begins. One day, when she was returning from her work .She encounters the leader of the street boys, Puli, who asks Rukmani for his payment because he had helped her by showing the way to the doctor's house. He follows Rukmani up to their residence repeating the same appeal of paying his money. The innocent face and words of Puli melts their hearts. Hence they divide the rice cake and dhal into three parts and give one to Puli. As they finish their meal Puli is asked to

go to his own home but the poor boy tells that he has 'no home', 'no parents'. Both of them hug Puli and wish keep him with them forever but they couldn't do so because they had very low income. Clever Puli suddenly tells them an idea to enhance their income. He persuades Rukmani and her husband to work in the quarry. They had to break the stones in required size. The quarry was on hillside which was not calm and pleasant but bare and rocky. All the men, women and the children were chipping the fragments of the larger stones. The sheet of rock used to be blasted time and again but it is Puli who makes them aware how to get rid from such difficulties and risk. Times passes on, whatever they earn remains hardly enough to feed their hungry belly. Despite that they are very much optimistic to save the money once and return to their home.

Rukmani and Nathan's happiness for returning to their village increases when they become able to collect eight anas but the pain inside their heart still lingers as they think of the separation with their dearest Puli. Nathan wishes his village with him but quite contradictorily Puli asserts him to stay in the city. Nathan at the same time tries to convince Puli by telling him that the city is not his 'home' and he had come there because he was forced. He had thought that his son lived there very comfortable life with a better job. He had expected that he would look after his old parents. Now, he is totally disillusioned. This bitter feeling aroused inside Nathan tells us how the poor villagers suffer in the city, how they are victimized, how their delicate balloons of their dreams get punctured as soon as they confront the thorns of urbanization.

With more enthusiasm and excitement both the couples work hard to save the money to return to their home. Suddenly Nathan suffers from the fever once again. His body shivers because of excessive cold. Rukmani says him to take rest not to go to work. But Nathan's longing to collect the money required to return to home compelled him continue his work. Their dearest nature once again becomes cruel to them. The rain falls heavily and violently

when they were hammering the stones into small pieces. They had to pick up the stones into sack. That's why, Rukmani goes to bring sack. At the same time, Nathan slides and falls down on the ground. All the laborers gather around him. Rukmani returns and finds her husband fighting bravely with the death. She takes her husband's head on her lap and tries to invigorate and console him expressing him that he would be 'right' very soon but poor Nathan couldn't defeat the terrible death, and closes his eyes forever. As Rukmani is left alone in the world, she returns to her home with her dear Puli. Her son Selvam and her daughter and Scarvani all welcome her home.

The entire novel *Nectar in a Sieve* is a journey of a peasant, Rukmani from the village to the urban and her return to her own native land. Through this journey, Markandaya reveals that industrialization and scientific development doesn't necessarily bring happiness and solace to the poor people like Rukmani and Nathan. It also connotes if the spirituality, morality and family bondages are undermined, Indian people can never be happy. In short, Markandaya has successfully revealed the Indian villagers have not been benefited and happy from such modern achievements rather it has destroyed all the spiritual properties like spirituality, morality, familial affinity and unity. They will remain in the same condition till they won't germinate again the very ornaments of the Indian culture.

Struggle for Identity

Kamala Markandaya, a contemporary Indian novelist of international repute, is very conscious of the cultures of the east and the west. In all her novels the personality of her characters is governed by the product of the environment and culture in which they live and grow. Their entire thinking about social ideals and values are determined by accumulation of artificial objects (dress, tools etc) conditions, techniques, ideas, symbols beliefs and the behavioral patterns peculiar to the group or community to whom they belong and are capable of transmitting their general attributes and views on life from one generation to another

generation. Moreover, their thinking is influenced and determined not only by the contemporary society but also by all the knowledge available in the form of philosophy, art and history that has been handed down from the past to the present.

Markandaya's Indian characters are steeped in religious beliefs and superstitions. They seem to be an integrated lot who possess a systematic set of ethical and social beliefs which are accepted norms of tradition and customs of Indian culture. No doubt they belong to various religious groups but most of them specifically represent the social group they belong to. They are distinctive and possess basic Indian cultural traits which are common to them. Yet they can be distinguished by their speech and language habits, food habits, dress patterns, occupation and religious practices and beliefs. They can be distinguished on the basis of caste and the class structure they belong to, the type of marriage ceremonies that are conducted. In fact, the entire Indian scenario is superbly painted in such a way that we get glimpses of the rich diversity that is prevalent among the ethnic groups not only in big Indian cities but also in the rural areas.

Rukmani in *Nectar in a Sieve* impresses us with her amazing capacity to compromise with the harsh facts of life. They emerge neither as a result of her actions nor because of her failures. There is no passivity in Rukmani's acceptance. As Kenny tries to persuade her to shout for help, she replies that "we would be pitiable creature indeed to be so weak, for, is not man's spirit given to him to rise above misfortunes?" (67). Nathan advises her to bend like grass so that she would not break. This almost serves as motif of the novel. This is in fact an effort to create independent identity remaining within the limits of indigenous Indian culture. Like other characters of Markandaya, Rukmani is also a conformist and traditionalist and occupies the center of the novel. Hence in this novel too, we find the writer's feminine sensibility. As usual she makes Rukmani a strong character drilled in the trends of Indian ethos. She possesses an admirable strength to face the calamities of life and is adept at the

wisdom of compromise and adjustment. She is passionately attached to her husband and fondly loves to her children. These all attributes attached to Rukmani makes evident that Indian women are the prototype for forgiveness.

In the midst of these inexorably malignant forces, Rukmani and Nathan struggle to work the land and raise their children. Two of their sons migrate to Ceylon as laborers in the hope of less wretched life. Another son, Murgan becomes a servant, eventually disappears and is not heard of again. Their fourth son is killed when he is beaten up by the tannery watchmen while he is allegedly trying to steal calfskin. The only daughter who is sent back from her husband's house, she starts prostitution in order to buy food for her younger brother Kuti during a famine. In spite of this Kuti eventually dies of malnutrition and Ira who has been abandoned by her husband, gives birth to an albino son. Rukmani and Nathan accept their only grandchild who is born out of wedlock, with courage and strong resignation to fate. Miseries and hardships seem to pile up in their life in quick succession, the remorseless cycle of nature goes on without any thought of the hazards for the poor villagers whom it invariably harms in one way or another, but their spirits are generally never broken. However, we can claim that these all events are because of their conservative beliefs and industrialization on the other.

Fate is a way of life in India, particularly in the village. Indeed it is very strong in Rukmani and Nathan too. One feels through their life story that it is one misfortune which prepares and gives them the courage to face the next. When nature's anger almost ruins them, whether it is during the floods or during the drought, they accept not only because they have no other alternatives but also because nature is inseparable part of their culture. They regard it no less than god. It is because of such affiliation with nature they think whatever has happened is according to the will of god.

The same spirit of acceptance and resignation is seen at work in the life of Rukmani's daughter, Ira. Her husband brings her back to her parental house because she turns to be barren. Nathan doesn't accept his son-in-law's decision unquestioningly saying "I don't blame him ... He is justified, for a man needs children (72). At the same time, Rukmani's love for son Kuti is such that she is prepared to suffer her loss rather than see him suffer. Markandaya presents us how the pain of a son and his mother's is emotionally joined together when one gets hurt, another suffers. This emotional bondage in between family members is exposed more vigorously as Nathan is about to die, Rukmani wails: "How shall I endure without you, who are my love and my life?"(188) Finally she endures it because of her unyielding will-power and self-respect which she retains till the end. The courage and strength to carry on the fight in the face of overpowering forces make her a heroic figure. She struggles and strives for the happiness of her husband and children. The source of all this audacity is no other than her faith on spirituality. Rukmani expresses her faith in God, 'we are all in God's hands, and He is merciful.' (72)

It is through Rukmani's eyes we watch the disintegration of Nathan's family and at last his death in Nectar in a sieve but Rukmani remains a fiercely independent and heroic. She faces series of problems.

Once again, this spirit of resignation before forces that they can do nothing to alter the situation is presented when Rukmani and Nathan get her daughter Ira prostituting herself to buy milk for her ailing brother Kuti. They try to stop from going out again and, when they realize that she has made up her mind that she will neither go hungry herself nor allow her brother to do Rukmani explains:

"Well, we let her go. We had tried everything in our power; there was nothing more we could do. She was no longer a child, to be cowed or

forced into submission but a grown up woman with a definite purpose and an invincible determination.” (138)

This is the same spirit which prompts Ira to accept her albino son as she would any other normal child. We can claim that there is no intellectualization or alternatives before these simple rural people but to accept their fate. This attitude is inherently ingrained and indelible part of their psyche. Indeed one can go so far as to say that this is the only response that they are capable of.

Kenny can be interpreted as a symbol of progressive enlightenment who shows the need for constructive programs for rural reforms and social service. Himself pure hearted, he has love for Rukmani's innocence and purity of mind. But at the same time he is ill at ease with Rukmani's and Nathan's docile nature and fatalistic tendency, their slow effort to change attitude, their carelessness regarding their personal hygiene and lack of education and information responsible for various superstitions. As a liberal humanist, full of philanthropy and missionary zeal he gets a hospital constructed for them by collecting funds from different sources and serves them dedicatedly by launching on a program for their education so that they may come out of their backwardness. His disgust at their inscrutable ways is born out of his love for them. He admires Indian women for their fidelity to their husband. He praises Rukmani for her sound instincts about man and woman relationship. He identifies himself with the Indians so much that he doesn't feel himself an alien among them. He doesn't even think that he is living in a country which is not his own. This is evident in his occasional conversation with Rukmani: “My country... sometimes I do not know which is my country .Until is today I had thought perhaps it was this” (109).

The fate of old couple brings them to the city. Symbolically they become stone breakers. Nathan dies bravely fighting with the difficulties of city and Rukmani is left alone but there is some hope in her forlorn heart because her son and daughter have rebuild their

lives on the graves of past and Rukamani gets the shelter and protection there. Similarly through the characterization of Rukmani and Ira Markandaya has focused on the major trails of a woman like bread wining. It may be through hard physical labor or prostitution to stave away starvation. Rukmani is an embodiment of motherhood.

To conclude the final impression that one gets of the characters of *Nectar in a sieve* is that particularly characters like Rukmani, Nathan, Ira and Kenny are the people who somehow have the strength and courage that helps them to survive and carry on in the apparently relentless and remorseless world to which they are inexorably bound. In the midst of nothingness as well there lies the hope to formulate identity in all central characters through the mutual bondage and understanding.

IV. Conclusion

The western intellectual, cultural and Indian spiritual life are properly juxtaposed in Kamala Markandaya's novel, *Nectar in a sieve*. The setting of the novel takes place in the rural area but her novels are urbanized as well. She focuses on the interplay of strategies of characterization for the treatment of cross- cultural interaction. Her focus is on the outsider, the expatriate, marginalized suggests a mixed cultural assimilation of discrete centers but with the strong presentation of the character which reveals us that Indians do have strong love and affection for their native culture.

Markandaya displays common Indian characteristics and represent a complex of emotions, feelings and attitudes towards mysteries and complexities of life. They have common attitudes, superstitions, beliefs and symbols that govern their social relations and which are sacred and normally imperative to them. When we look at this aspect of characterization we realize that through this device Kamala Markandaya raises those ordinary rural peasants to the level of universal types- admirable, though people are ordinary peasant but they are battling with all their might against a malevolent fate determining the life of the people through out the world. Before which they as other human beings they eventually bow down, and whose verdict they invariably accept. This is best presented through the life of Rukmani and Nathan and Kenny's characterization.

At the same time, Markandaya never forgets to present the underlined essence of spiritual qualities of Indian culture. They are all religious. Rites and rituals and offerings are made during the harvest season for a bumper and good agriculture in this novel. The protagonist, Rukmani, takes seed to the Goddess and offers it for getting her blessing to get

rid from the famine. Rukmani and Nathan both are the victims of their own fate and they represent the fate of whole Indian peasant.

Markandaya also highlights development at the socio-economic level, the process of industrialization at the village level and its fear and hope caused on their life. Markandaya brings Kenny, a foreigner, as a figure to conduct the development program and support the poor farmers. Markandaya by bringing into contact the people to two different cultures and traditions has striven to establish mutual understanding and harmony between the westerner and the Indian from the humanistic standpoint.

Markandaya treats the cross –cultural relationship between the European and the Indians, where people from different culture and race try to develop a bond of mutual understanding on common cultural ground despite difference. At times they preserve their heterogeneity but their soul concern is to develop a reciprocal relation in order to share a common cultural way of life. Dr Kenny is the representative character who is uprooted from his original homeland. He keenly observes and outlets the predicaments of Rukmani's villagers. Character like Kenny gets solace from his fearful and hunting past by the meaningful present. Though Rukmani is traditional, spiritual Indian woman but it doesn't mean that she doesn't know anything about western culture but rather she is always prepared to adopt the good aspects of western culture where she feels it being supportive in her existence.

Markandaya's effort through this novel is not only to present the indigenous Indian culture but also reveal its laps and gaps. She deals with the universal theme of isolation and shouts for universal co-operation. Her journey of bridging the gap between two diverse cultures starts right from the rural areas of India where she finds people suffering from many superstitions. At the same time, Markandaya makes her character quite audacious to change according to the need of time. This relation is presented in the novel .Both of them become

supplementary in their being. Such main characters stand as symbols as representative of social groups or traditional types. Nathan and Rukmani are representatives of uprooted peasants, Kenny of the finer tradition of the west, Thambi and Arjun of indentured laborers, Puli of the triumph of the rural world over the urban.

To sum up Markandaya's characters in the present novel emerge either as reflectors of social change or as symbols of particular phase of Indian life. Through her novels, she reveals the fact that the future prospects of cross-cultural relations are dim unless cultures are unwilling to become more genuinely engaged with one another.

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