

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

Ph.D. (PART-TIME) Research Proposal

TOPIC: RESILIENCE AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMANHOOD: A STUDY ON THE SELECT WORKS OF KAMALA MARKANDAYA

INTRODUCTION

Kamala Markandaya, the face of the Indian women and women of the world at large had voiced for the thousands of voiceless women through her works. She belonged to the era when women were given least importance both in the household and also in the society. Born in 1924, Kamala Markandaya had her education at Madras University. Her first novel *Nectar in a Sieve* was published in 1924. She wrote in the maiden name 'Purnai Kamala Taylor'. Life is not same for all, especially for women, life is a roller coaster. Every stage of womanhood, gives different experience to women. Of both the genders it is women who live with lot of key responsibilities. At the same time her responsibility and commitment turn futile. She is not measured based on her role but rather judged based on her gender. To voice against the oppression is itself one of the noble traits and women started developing this survival trait in course of time. Literature is the one strong medium through which the agony of women is inscribed continuously. Kamala Markandaya did this role eloquently. For her women characters were the epitome of resilience and empowerment.

India, the land of farmers, the land of divinity has always adorned woman and womanhood. But the authenticity of this adoration is the million dollar question posed every day. Indian culture presents the glory of women. But the reality seems to be different. Oppressor cannot oppress unless the oppressed allows it. For centuries together women of India were inculcated with the ideology of chastity. Virtue of a family solely lies on the conduct of the women, given by the society. Women who resist, question and fight back are labelled with a derogatory nomenclature. Hence Indian women are constantly put in a pressurized situation to cope with the need and expectation of the society. Works of Kamala Markandaya are the mirror reflection of the plight of the Indian Women. She not only presented the trauma of Indian women, but also through her characters she taught them resistance, resilience and empowerment. These three traits are much essential for any woman to survive. Existence is not survival, living is survival. Multitudes of Indian Women are denied this basic survival. “Why should I?” and “Why not I?” these questions were considered as blasphemy, when raised by women. Kamala Markandaya posed all these questions through the life of her characters.

HYPOTHESIS

This study aims in presenting the state of Indian Women and how Kamala Markandaya through her female characters has presented the power of resistance and empowerment of women

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The primary works of this research are *Nectar in a Sieve*, *A Silence of Desire*, *Possession*, *Handful of Rice* and *Two Virgins*. Secondary sources like Margaret P. Joseph's , *Kamal Markandaya* , Madhusudan Prasad's *Perspectives on Kamal Markandaya*, Aithal, Krishnamoorthy and Rashmi Aithal, "Indo-English Fictional Experiments with Interracial and intercultural Relationship", James Dale's *Kamala Markandaya and the Outsider*, R.K. Dhawan's *Indian Women Novelists*, Harish Raizada's *East-West confrontation in the Novels of , Kamal Markandaya*, will help to substantiate the thesis statement.

CHAPTERIZATION

Descriptive and analytical methodology will be followed in the research work. **Chapter I Introduction** will work on the life of Kamal Markandaya, her milieu, her contemporaries, state of women writers in the Indian Writing in English. The chapter will also raise the research questions and present the objectives of the research. Theoretical framework and methodology of the research will be discussed in detail in this chapter. Through her works, Kamala Markandaya has brilliantly and naturally portrayed society and man, as well as their interactions, in both conscious and organic ways. As a novelist she has presented the diverse roles of men and women which will be well examined in this study.

Chapter II is The Realm of Women. This chapter deals with the limitations faced by women in her life. Women are frequently shown in Markandaya's works as being restricted to conventional social duties, such as being caregivers and housewives. Their

autonomy and agency are restricted by these social norms and expectations, which also serve to uphold patriarchal systems that determine their position in society. The difficulties and obstacles that women encounter in traditional communities are illuminated by Markandaya's examination of these subjects, underscoring the necessity of women's empowerment and freedom from these repressive structures. The constraints and difficulties that female characters' encounter in Kamala Markandaya's writings mirror the more general difficulties that women encounter in patriarchal cultures. Markandaya uses her characters to show how women are frequently excluded from opportunities for education, autonomy, and self-determination. These restrictions not only affect specific women but also support social cycles of inequality and poverty. By illustrating the intricacies of women's life in conventional societies, Markandaya draws attention to the pressing need for gender equality and societal reform. This chapter sheds light on this path of women.

Chapter III is Self-Realisation and Self-Discovery. Self-discovery is the other major themes in Kamala Markandaya's writings, in addition to self-realization. This idea entails characters discovering secrets about the universe, their relationships, and themselves. Characters frequently face their desires, anxieties, and uncertainties on their self-discovery journey, which ultimately results in a greater awareness of both the self and the society that they live in. The intricacies of human psychology and the transformational potential of self-reflection and self-awareness are shown by Markandaya's investigation of self-discovery. Examination of characters' quests for self-awareness shows how difficult it is for everyone to balance their inherent aspirations and principles with the demands that are placed on them by others. Characters in Markandaya's novels frequently struggle with

cultural expectations, society conventions, and personal convictions as they forge their own routes to self-realization. In a society that frequently encourages conformity, this examination of self-discovery is a moving reminder of the value of authenticity and self-acceptance.

Markandaya emphasizes the fortitude and power that come from accepting oneself in the midst of hardship through the experiences of her characters. As they set out on their quests for self-discovery, Markandaya's characters frequently face a variety of difficulties and trials. These challenges put their strength and tenacity to the test and make them face their worst anxieties and insecurities. However, individuals can only fully comprehend oneself and everything around them by conquering these challenges. They learn a vital lesson from every obstacle they encounter, which helps them become more self-aware and shapes their personalities. In this sense, Markandaya's examination of self-discovery highlights the transformational potential of accepting oneself as one is, in addition to the significance of authenticity and self-acceptance. This vital journey of mankind is analysed in this chapter.

Chapter IV is Resistance and Empowerment. The works of Kamala Markandaya are distinguished by a strong spirit of rebellion against oppressive social institutions and practices. Her writing frequently examines the hardships faced by underprivileged communities and how they oppose and fight the current status. The power dynamics in the world and the various ways in which people might empower each other in the face of hardship are illuminated by Markandaya's characters. This chapter will explore the themes of empowerment and resistance in Markandaya's writings, looking at how her character's

deal with setbacks and triumph in order to claim their own agency and independence. Analysis of how characters resist societal norms and expectations will be the central focus of this chapter. The intricacies of resistance and empowerment in the face of structural inequality will be better understood by looking at the methods and techniques her characters use to oppose and undermine repressive systems.

The ways in which Markandaya's characters overcome the limitations imposed upon them and establish their own agency in the face of hardship will be revealed through careful reading and analysis of significant passages from her works. Examining Kamala Markandaya's works on empowerment and resistance provides a profound message about how individual acts have the capacity to ignite social change. Resistance can result in personal development and emancipation, this will be revealed through the examination of characters who oppose repressive systems and reject social standards. A major topic of Markandaya's literature is the connection between social and personal change, which serves as a reminder of the significance of speaking up against injustice and pursuing a more just society. All things considered, Markandaya's examination of empowerment and resistance in her writings is a compelling reminder of the possibility of change when people have the courage to question the tyrannical authority.

Chapter V is Conclusion. This chapter will discuss the summary of the findings and the implications of feminist theories and the scope for future research. Women characters of Kamala Markandaya own strong sense of resistance and resilience, which eventually lead to their empowerment. This chapter will encompass this significant quality of Kamala Markandaya's works.

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