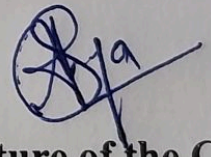


## Declaration


I declare that the project entitled “**The Portrayal of Social Evils in Kamala Markandaya’s *A Handful of Rice and Nectar in a Sieve*”** submitted by **Soniya.A** for the degree of Master of Arts (M.A) in English, is the record of work carried out during the period of December 2022 – May 2023 under the guidance of **Mrs.K.Usha Savithri (MA., B.Ed., M.Phil., (Ph.D))** Assistant Professor, Department of English, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women (SF), Coimbatore, and, has not formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Associateship, Fellowship or similar Titles in this University or any other University or other similar Institutions of Higher Learning.



**Signature of the Candidate**

## Certificate

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled "**The Portrayal of Social Evils in Kamala Markandaya's *A Handful of Rice and Nectar in a Sieve***" submitted to Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women (SF), Coimbatore, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Arts (M.A)** is a dissertation carried out by **Soniya.A.** during the period from December 2022 – May 2023 in under my guidance of **Mrs.K.Usha Savithri (MA., B.Ed. M.Phil., (Ph.D))** Assistant Professor, Department of English, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women (SF), Coimbatore and has not formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Associateship, and Fellowship, or similar Titles in this University or any other University or other similar Institutions of Higher Learning.



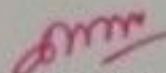
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## Introduction

Literature is the imaginative work that pictures the human life in a society which can be enjoyed, understood, and used by society. Literature is a means of social expression, a mirror of life, and interpretation of human expression that helps us understand how to live. Literature is a body of written works. The name has traditionally been applied to those imaginative works of poetry and prose distinguished by the intentions of their authors and the perceived aesthetic excellence of their execution. Literature is the written work of a specific culture, sub-culture, religion, philosophy, or the study of such written work which may appear in poetry or prose.

Literature, in the west, originated in the southern Mesopotamia region of Sumer in the city of Uruk and flourished in Egypt, later in Greece seems to have originated independently in China from divination practices and also independently in Mesoamerica and elsewhere. Much of the early literature from Mesopotamia concerns the activities of the gods but, in time, humans came to be featured as the main characters in such poems as *Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta* and *Lugalbanda and Mount Hurrum*.

For study Literature is a term used to describe written works that have artistic or intellectual value and are often studied and appreciated for their literary qualities. It encompasses a wide variety of genres, including poetry, drama, fiction, non-fiction, and more. Literature has been an important part of human culture since the dawn of civilization, providing a means for people to express themselves, share their stories and ideas, and reflect on the world around them. Throughout history, literature has served as a means of cultural exchange and has been a powerful tool for shaping our

collective understanding of the world and ourselves. Literature is divided into the categories of fiction or non-fiction today but these are often arbitrary decisions as ancient literature, as understood by those who wrote the tales down, as well as those who heard them spoken or sung pre-literacy, was not understood in the same way as it is in the modern day.

For historical treatment of various kinds of literature within geographical regions, see such articles as African literature; African theatre; Oceanic literature; Western literature; Central Asian arts; South Asian arts; and Southeast Asian arts. Some literature is treated separately by language, by nation, or by special subject such as Arabic literature, Celtic literature, Latin literature, French literature, Japanese literature, and biblical literature.

Definitions of the word literature tend to be circular. definitions assume that the reader already knows what literature is. And indeed its central meaning, at least, is clear enough. Deriving from the Latin *littera*, a letter of the alphabet then it is individual pieces of writing. But already it is necessary to qualify these statements. To use the word writing when describing the literature is itself misleading, for one may speak of oral literature or the literature of preliterate peoples. The art of literature is not reducible to the words on the page they are there solely because of the craft of writing. As an art literature might be described as the organization of words to give pleasure. Yet through words literature elevates and transforms experience beyond pleasure.

The idea that literature contains multitudes is not new. For the greater part of its history, return referred to any writing formed with letters. Up until the eighteenth century, the only true makers of creative work were poets, and what they aspired to

was not literature but poetry. Literary works are often studied for their artistic and intellectual merit, as well as their historical and cultural significance. They provide a window into different periods, cultures, and perspectives, and can challenge our assumptions and broaden our understanding of the human experience.

Some of the most well-known and influential literary works include the plays of Shakespeare, the novels of Jane Austen and Charles Dickens the poetry of William Wordsworth and Emily Dickinson, and the non-fiction works of Albert Camus and Virginia Woolf among countless others. Literature refers to written or spoken works of art that use language to evoke emotions, express ideas, and convey information. It encompasses a wide range of genres and styles, including poetry, fiction, drama, non-fiction, and more.

Literature has been a fundamental part of human culture since ancient times, serving as a means of recording history, expressing beliefs and values, and entertaining and educating readers. It has the power to connect people across time and space, enabling readers to explore diverse perspectives and experiences and to gain insight into the human condition. Throughout history literature has been shaped by a variety of factors, including cultural and social contexts, political movements, and individual writers and their experiences. From the epic poems of ancient civilizations to the experimental novels of modernism, literature continues to evolve and challenge readers to expand their understanding of themselves and the world around them. Studying literature can be a rewarding experience, providing opportunities to engage with powerful and thought-provoking works of art, and to develop critical thinking, analytical, and communication skills.

Those writings that are primarily informative technical, scholarly, journalistic would be excluded from the rank of literature by most though not all critics. Certain forms of writing, however, are universally regarded as belonging to literature as an art. Individual attempts within these forms are said to succeed if they possess something called artistic merit and to fail if they do not.

Most great dramas are considered literature although the Chinese, possessors of one of the world's greatest dramatic traditions, consider their plays, with few exceptions, to possess no literary merit whatsoever. The essay was once written deliberately as a piece of literature: its subject matter was of comparatively minor importance. Some personal documents like autobiographies, diaries, memoirs, and letters rank among the world's greatest literature. Many works of philosophy are classed as literature. Oratory, the art of persuasion, was long considered a great literary art. Works of literature, at their best, provide a kind of blueprint of human society.

English literature refers to the body of written works produced in the English language, primarily by writers from the United Kingdom and Ireland, but also from former British colonies such as the United States, Canada, Australia, and India. English literature covers a wide range of genres, styles, and periods, from medieval literature to contemporary literature. It includes poetry, drama, fiction, non-fiction, and literary criticism. The study of English literature is a discipline that focuses on the analysis and interpretation of literary texts, as well as the historical and cultural contexts in which they were produced. It encompasses a wide range of critical approaches, including formalism, historicism, feminism, postcolonialism, and psychoanalysis. English literature has had a profound impact on the world, influencing not only other literary traditions but also politics, culture, and society. It

has produced some of the most iconic and enduring works of literature, including Shakespeare's plays Jane Austen's novels and Charles Dickens social commentaries.

Today, English literature continues to be a vital and dynamic field of study and creative expression. English literature refers to the body of written works produced in the English language, including works from England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, and other English-speaking countries. The study of English literature involves close reading and analysis of literary texts, as well as an understanding of literary history, literary theory, and critical approaches to literary interpretation.

It is a fascinating field that offers insight into the cultural, social, and historical contexts of different periods and styles of literature. English literature refers to the body of written works in the English language, including poetry, drama, fiction, non-fiction, and other forms of literature produced by authors from countries where English is the primary language. English literature is the body of written works produced in the English language by inhabitants of the British Isles from the 7th century to the present day. The major literature written in English outside the British Isles is treated separately under American literature, Australian literature, Canadian literature, and New Zealand literature.

The earliest works of English literature mirror the life lived by the people of that region at that specific period. For instance, all the changes undergone by English society from the earliest to modern times have left their imprints on English literature.

Literature written in the English language includes many countries such as the United Kingdom and its crown dependencies, the Republic of Ireland, the United States, and the countries of the former British Empire. The earliest forms of English, a set of Anglo-Frisian dialects brought to Great Britain by Anglo-Saxon invaders in the

fifth century, are called Old English. The English spoken after the Normans came is middle English, when the Chancery Standard started Middle English, a London based form of English, became widespread.

It is strong in all the conventional categories of the bookseller's list in Shakespeare, it has a dramatist of world renown; in poetry, a genre notoriously resistant to adequate translation and therefore difficult to compare with the poetry of other literature, it is so peculiarly rich as to merit inclusion in the front rank English literature's humor has been found as hard to convey to foreigners as poetry if not more so a fact at any rate permitting bestowal of the label idiosyncratic English literature's remarkable body of travel writings constitutes another counterthrust to the charge of insularity in autobiography, biography, and historical writing, English literature compares with the best of any culture and children's literature, fantasy, essays, and journals, which tend to be considered minor genres, are all fields of exceptional achievement as regards English literature.

Even in philosophical writings, popularly thought of as hard to combine with literary value, thinkers such as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, David Hume, John Stuart Mill, and Bertrand Russell stand comparison for lucidity and grace with the best of the French philosophers and the masters of Classical antiquity The history of English literature initiated with the history of the English race and kept on developing with the social development of the nation. When we analyze the history of English literature, we discover that it consists of eight major periods and several ages. Each period or age of English literature is named after the central literary figure, the important rulers of England, or certain literary movements. Moreover, each period or phase of English literature has its distinct characteristics.

The Contemporary Period Indian literature, writings of the Indian subcontinent, produced there in a variety of vernacular languages, including Sanskrit, Prakrit, Pali, Bengali, Bihari, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Malayalam, Oriya, Punjabi, Rajasthani, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, Lahnda, Siraiki, and Sindhi, among others, as well as in English. The term Indian literature is used here to refer to literature produced across the Indian subcontinent before the creation of the Republic of India and within the Republic of India . Throughout its history, English literature has reflected the social, cultural, and political changes of the times, and has been shaped by a wide range of literary movements and genres.

Some of the most well-known and influential writers in English literature include William Shakespeare, Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, and Toni Morrison, among many others. English literature continues to evolve and inspire new generations of writers, readers, and scholars, making it an essential and fascinating field of study. Indian literature is the body of written works produced in India, including poetry, drama, fiction, non-fiction, and other forms of literature.

India has a rich and diverse literary tradition that spans many centuries and encompasses a wide range of languages and cultures. Indian literature has a long history that dates back to the ancient civilizations of the Indus Valley and the Vedic period. Over the centuries, Indian literature has been shaped by a variety of influences, including religion, mythology, philosophy, and politics. One of the most notable features of Indian literature is its diversity of languages and regional cultures. India is home to over twenty official languages, with numerous other languages and dialects spoken throughout the country. Each of these languages has its unique literary tradition, with its own set of themes, styles, and techniques.

Indian literature has produced some of the world's most influential and acclaimed writers, including Rabindranath Tagore, Vikram Seth, Arundhati Roy, Salman Rushdie, and many others. Indian literature continues to evolve and thrive, reflecting the changing social, cultural, and political landscape of the country, and inspiring new generations of writers and readers. Indian literature refers to the literary works produced in the languages of the Indian subcontinent, including Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Urdu, and many others. It is a rich and diverse body of literature that has been shaped by India's long and complex history, cultural traditions, and social values.

These are some of the sacred texts in the Hindu culture. The list is a never-ending list. However, with time, literature from different languages also came into existence. Indian literature includes everything which is included in the word literature religious and mundane, epic and lyric, dramatic and didactic poetry, narrative and scientific prose, as well as oral poetry and song . It is, therefore, not very correct to say that ancient Indian literature includes only the religious classics of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. Jain narrative literature in the Prakrit language is full of

Additionally, the Tamil Sangam literature is mostly by people belonging to South India. The oldest work of literature which can survive from that period is Tolkappiyam, a work on the Grammar of Tamil. Moreover, the Tamil Sangam literature that is known to historians today is known to evolve during the Third Sangam. Indian Literature after the Independence of the country witnessed some major changes in terms of literary writings. Indian independence may be a historic event for its socio-political significance. But according to some writers, this event has had an outstanding impact on the creative writing done in various regional languages

of the writers. India's nationalism at the point before independence was a nationalism of grief and mourning.

Thus most of the new age writers through their writings portrayed the terrible fake world that was based on Western modernism. However, in a country like India, the vast culture of the past does not go off completely. With the independence of the country, the cultural rhythm of the past certainly broke down as a result of modernistic experimentations. Post-independence India did see greater awareness on the part of the reading public as well as the government of the existence of many more and richer languages and literature, beyond the limited periphery of one's mother tongue or province. Some states entered a big way by giving prizes and awards and much translation work was encouraged.

Writers received the opportunity of visiting new places and publicize their works. All this, with all its limitations, did stimulate a literary climate. Further, the industrial and scientific advancement throughout the country after independence also had an impact on Indian literature. Despite the new vistas opened to the writers in the form of writing for the new mass media like the film, the Radio, and TV, the character of Indian literature continues to remain feudal, romantic, pastoral, idyllic, and medievalist. Interestingly, the post-independence literature of the country showed signs that permanent literature springs out of great tragedy.

Fiction refers to a form of literature that is primarily based on imagination and not on real events or people. It is a type of narrative writing that tells a story using characters, plot, setting, and other literary elements. Fiction is often categorized into various genres, such as romance, science fiction, horror, and mystery. Fictional works are created by writers who use their imagination to create characters, settings, and

plots that capture the reader's attention and imagination. Fictional works can be entertaining, thought-provoking, and insightful, providing readers with a means of exploring different perspectives experiences, and emotions.

Today, fiction is a popular form of entertainment and artistic expression and is consumed in a variety of forms, including books, movies, TV shows, and video games. Studying fiction can be an engaging and enriching experience, providing readers with opportunities to explore different worlds and characters, and to develop critical thinking, analytical, and communication skills. Fictional works can challenge readers' assumptions and beliefs, and offer new perspectives on the world around us.

It is often contrasted with non-fiction, which is based on factual information and real-life events. Fiction can take many different forms, including novels, short stories, novellas, and flash fiction. It may be written in various styles, such as literary fiction, romance, science fiction, fantasy, and historical fiction, among others. Fiction allows readers to enter imaginary worlds and experience events and emotions through the eyes of fictional characters. It often explores universal themes and issues that are relevant to readers' lives, such as love, loss, identity, power, and social justice.

Writers of fiction use a range of techniques to engage readers and create a compelling narrative, including plot, characterization, setting, dialogue, and symbolism. Through these techniques, they aim to evoke emotions, provoke thought, and communicate ideas and messages. Fiction has been an important part of human culture for thousands of years, providing a means of entertainment, education, and social commentary. It continues to be a popular and influential genre, inspiring readers and writers alike to explore the complexities of the human experience.

It is also known for its exploration of the tension between tradition and modernity, as well as its engagement with global themes and ideas. Indian fiction is written in a variety of languages, including Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, Telugu, and English. It encompasses a wide range of genres and styles, including literary fiction, crime fiction, science fiction, and historical fiction, among others.

To evolve and inspire new generations of writers and readers, making it an important and dynamic part of contemporary world literature. Indian fiction refers to the genre of literature that is written by Indian authors or set in India. It encompasses a wide range of styles, themes, and perspectives, reflecting the rich cultural and social diversity of India. Indian fiction can be traced back to ancient times, with texts such as the Ramayana and the Mahabharata representing early examples of Indian storytelling.

Over time, Indian fiction has evolved and diversified, encompassing various genres such as romance, mystery, historical fiction, science fiction, and more. Indian fiction has been shaped by a variety of cultural and social influences, including Hinduism, Islam, British colonialism, and India's struggle for independence. It explores a range of themes and issues that are relevant to Indian society, including caste, class, gender, religion, politics, and identity. Indian fiction has produced several acclaimed writers, such as Rabindranath Tagore, R.K. Narayan, Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy, and Jhumpa Lahiri, among others. It has also gained international recognition and popularity, with many Indian authors achieving success and critical acclaim on the global stage. Indian fiction continues to be an important part of Indian culture and identity, providing a means of exploring and reflecting on the complexities of Indian society and history, as well as entertaining and inspiring readers around the world.

In its early stages, Indian English literature was influenced by the Western novel. Early Indian writers used English unadulterated by Indian words to convey an experience that was essentially Indian. Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay wrote *Rajmohan's Wife* and published it in 1864; it is the first Indian novel written in English. Lal Behari Day's *Govinda Samanta or the History of a Bengali Raiyat* was published in 1874 and the same author's *Folk Tales of Bengal: Life's Secret* was published in 1912. *Bianca, or The Young Spanish Maiden* by Toru Dutt was the first novel written by an Indian woman. Both Toru Dutt and Krupabai Sathianadhan, two promising Indian English writers of the nineteenth century died untimely in their early twenties and thirties respectively. Sathianadhan's autobiographical novel *Saguna: A Story of Native Christian Life* was published serially in *The Madras Christian College Magazine*.

In the early 20th century, when the British conquest of India was achieved, a new breed of writers started to emerge on the block. These writers were essentially British who were born or brought up or both in India. Their writing consisted of Indian themes and sentiments but the way of storytelling was primarily Western. They had no reservations in using native words, though, to signify the context. This group consisted likes of Rudyard Kipling, Jim Corbett, and George Orwell among others. Books such as *Kim*, *The Jungle Book*, *1984*, *Animal Farm*, and *The Man-eaters of Kumaon*, etc were liked and read all over the English-speaking world. Some of the writings of that era are still considered to be the masterpieces of English Literature. In those periods, natives were represented by the likes of Rabindra Nath Tagore and Sarojini Naidu. *Geetanjali* helped Tagore win Nobel Prize for Literature.

R.K. Narayan is a writer who contributed over many decades and who continued to write till his death recently. He was discovered by Graham Greene in the

sense that the latter helped him find a publisher in England. Graham Greene and Narayan remained close friends till the end. Similar to Thomas Hardy's Wessex, Narayan created the fictitious town of Malgudi where he set his novels. Some criticize Narayan for the parochial, detached, and closed world that he created in the face of the changing conditions in India at the times in which the stories are set. Others, such as Graham Greene, however, feel that through Malgudi they could vividly understand the Indian experience.

Narayan's evocation of small-town life and its experiences through the eyes of the endearing child protagonist Swaminathan in *Swami and Friends* is a good sample of his writing style. Simultaneous with Narayan's pastoral idylls, a very different writer, Mulk Raj Anand, was similarly gaining recognition for his writing set in rural India; but his stories were harsher, and engaged, sometimes brutally, with divisions of caste, class, and religion. Among the later writers, the most notable is Salman Rushdie, born in India, and now living in the United Kingdom. Rushdie with his famous work *Midnight's Children* ushered in a new trend of writing. He used a hybrid language English generously peppered with Indian terms – to convey a theme that could be seen as representing the vast canvas of India. He is usually categorized under the magic realism mode of writing most famously associated with Gabriel García Márquez. Nayantara Sehgal was one of the first female Indian writers in English to receive wide recognition.

Anita Desai was shortlisted for the Booker Prize three times, received a Sahitya Akademi Award in 1978 for her novel *Fire on the Mountain*, and the British Guardian Prize for *The Village by the Sea*. Her daughter Kiran Desai won the 2006 Man Booker Prize for her second novel *The Inheritance of Loss*. Ruskin Bond received Sahitya Academy Award for his collection of short stories *Our Trees Still*

Grow in Dehra in 1992. He is also the author of a historical novel *A Flight of Pigeons*, which is based on an episode during the Indian Rebellion of 1857.

One of the key issues raised in this context is the superiority/inferiority of Indian Writing in English as opposed to the literary production in the various languages of India. Key concepts bandied in this context are superficial/authentic, imitative/creative, shallow/deep, critical/uncritical, elitist/parochial, and so on. Hanif Kureishi, born 5 December 1954 is a British playwright, screenwriter, filmmaker, and novelist of Pakistani and English descent. In 2008, *The Times* included Kureishi in its list of The 50 greatest British writers since 1945.

Hanif Kureishi speaking in the Michael C. Carlos Museum at Emory University on 8 September 2008 Kureishi was born in Bromley, South London to a Pakistani father, Rafiushan Shanoo Kureishi, and an English mother, Audrey Buss. His father was from a wealthy Madras family, most of whose members moved to Pakistan after the Partition of British India Rafiushan came to the UK in 1950 to study law but due to financial reasons he worked at the Pakistani embassy instead. Here he met his wife-to-be, Buss. He wanted to be a writer but his ambitions were frustrated. The couple was married, and the family settled in Bromley where Kureishi was born. In an interview, Kureishi notes, He went on to write plays for the Hampstead Theatre, Soho Poly, and by the age of 18, was with the Royal Court. He wrote *My Beautiful Laundrette* a screenplay about a gay Pakistani-British boy growing up in 1980s London for a film directed by Stephen Frears. The screenplay, especially the racial discrimination experienced, contained elements from Hanif's experiences as the only Pakistani student in his class at school. It won the New York City Film Critics Best Screenplay Award and an Academy Award nomination. for Best Original Screenplay.

He also wrote the screenplay for *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid*. His book *The Buddha of Suburbia* 1990 won the Whitbread Award for the best first novel and was made into a BBC television series with a soundtrack by David Bowie. He saw the release of the feature film titled *London Kills Me*, written and directed by Kureishi. His novel *Intimacy* 1998 revolved around the story of a man leaving his wife and two young sons after feeling physically and emotionally rejected by his wife. This created some controversy as Kureishi recently had left his partner at least semi-autobiographical.

Sir Ahmed Salman Rushdie born 19 June 1947 is an Indian-born British-American novelist and essayist. His work, combining magical realism with historical fiction, is primarily concerned with the many connections, disruptions, and migrations between Eastern and Western civilizations, with much of his fiction being set on the Indian subcontinent. His fourth novel was the subject of a major controversy, provoking protests from Muslims in several countries. Death threats were against him, including a fatwa calling for his assassination issued by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the Supreme Leader of Iran.

The British government put Rushdie under police protection. He was elected a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, the UK's senior literary organization. He was appointed Commander de l'Ordre des Arts des Letters of France in January. Queen Elizabeth II knighted him for his services to literature. *The Times* ranked him thirteenth on its list of the fifty greatest British writers. Rushdie has lived in the United States. He was named Distinguished Writer in Residence at the Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute of New York University in 2015. Earlier, he taught at Emory University.

He was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters. In 2012, he published *Joseph Anton: A Memoir*, an account of his life in the wake of the controversy over *The Satanic Verses*. He was educated at Cathedral and John Connon School, Bombay, Rugby School in Warwickshire, and King's College, Cambridge, where he read history. Rushdie had an operation to correct ptosis, a problem with the levator palpebrae superior muscle that causes drooping of the upper eyelid.

According to Rushdie, it was making it increasingly difficult for him to open his eyes. Rushdie has lived in New York City. He is a fan of the English football club Tottenham Hotspur. Salman Rushdie has received many plaudits for his writings, including the European Union's Aristeion Prize for Literature, the Premio Grinzane Cavour (Italy), the Writer of the Year Award in Germany, and many of literature's highest honors. His Awards and Honors' also include Golden PEN Award, Hans Christian Andersen Literature Award, the Swiss Freethinkers, and many others.

Anita Desai, born Anita Mazumdar born 24 June 1937 is an Indian novelist and the Emerita John E. Burchard Professor of Humanities at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. As a writer, she has been shortlisted for the Booker Prize three times. She received a Sahitya Academy Award in 1978 for her novel *Fire on the Mountain*, from the Sahitya Academy, India's National Academy of Letters. She won the British Guardian Prize. Desai was born in 1937 in Missouri, India, to a German immigrant mother, Toni, and a Bengali businessman, D. N. Mazumdar. Her Bengali father first met her German mother while he was an engineering student in pre-war Berlin, and they got married during a period when it was still unusual for an Indian man to marry a European woman. Shortly after their marriage, they moved to New Delhi, where Desai was raised with her two elder sisters and brother. She grew up speaking Hindi with her neighbours, and only German at her home. She also spoke

Bengali, Urdu, and English out of her house. She first learned to read and write in English at school and as a result, English became her literary language.

She began to write in English at the age of seven and published her first story at the age of nine. She was a student at Queen Mary's Higher Secondary School in Delhi and received her B.A. in English literature in 1957 House of the University of Delhi. The following year she married Anita Desai, the director from the Mirandator of a computer software company and author of the book *Between Eternities: Ideas on Life and The Cosmos*. Desai published her first novel, *Cry The Peacock*, in 1963. In 1958 she collaborated with and founded the publishing firm Writers Workshop. She considers *Clear Light of Day* her most autobiographical work as it is set during her coming of age and also in the same neighborhood in which she grew up.

She published in *Custody* about an Urdu poet in his declining days which was shortlisted for the Booker Prize. In 1993, she became a creative writing teacher at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Desai has taught at Mount Holyoke College, Baruch College, and Smith College. She is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and Girton College, Cambridge

Kamala Markandaya was born in a small town in Mysore, India on January 1, 1924, and went on to graduate from Madras University with a degree in History. Markandaya then went on to be a journalist and writer in life. Her work, majorly short stories, was published in various Indian newspapers of that time. There was a certain shade of controversy attached to her transnational marriage. She settled in Britain after India retrieved its independence in 1948 and got married to Bertrand Taylor, an Englishman. Although she lived in Britain for the larger part of her life, Kamala Markandaya always labeled herself as an expatriate.

Waves of her geographically bifurcated and culturally divided marriage made appearances in her work repetitively. She was the product of a country in the midst of conflict and represented the social hierarchies of such a systematically cracked place. Her marriage gave her life a certain notion of duality because it brought her out of the comfortable crevices of the identity which she was born into and put her in an alienated land.

During Markandaya's youth, India was officially a colony of the British Empire. This led to a mix of both traditional Indian and contemporary English cultural influences, most notably the widespread use of the English language. A popular movement supporting the independence of India gained momentum throughout the 1920s and 1930s, largely due to the leadership of Mohandas Gandhi.

She is infamous for her novel, *Nectar in a Sieve*, which magnifies the struggle of an Indian woman's life set in the backdrop of rural India which is identified by its star agricultural tones. Her novel *Some Inner Fury* borrows heavily from her own life because Markandaya writes about a woman who is in love with an English man during the time of the Quit India Campaign and is torn apart from the idea of their love by the idea of her country's freedom.

Kamala Markandaya has presented varied tensions in her novels viz. East-West confrontation, religious and racial tensions, tensions caused on account of maladjustments or marital disharmony, tensions arising out of poverty, hunger, natural as well as man-made calamities. There is a considerable ambiguity about the nature and status of woman in Indian society. Some sacred texts give them an exalted status by saying where women are worshipped, Gods reside there. But there is another profile of woman. She is regarded as the root of all evils. These two images are

contradictory. This male dominated society never tries to go into the depth to collect the pearls of virtues but satisfies in picking the straws of vices that float on the surface.

Kamala Markandaya is respected by many for her outspoken voice among the Indian people and has often been credited by many for bringing recognition to Indian literature. Charles Larson of the American University in Washington wrote, Most American's perception of India came through Kamala Markandaya; she helped forge the image of India for American readers in schools and book clubs After Markandaya's husband died in 1986, she made frequent trips to India, where she continued to write

Through her novels, Markandaya brings to light the complication of post-colonial and traditional Indian social hierarchy as well as the implications prevalent within both systems. These themes are most noticeable in her novel *A Silence of Desire*, where she addresses the issues of social classes of India and the controversies surrounding this social hierarchy Publications *Nectar in a Sieve* Markandaya's first published novel, was the third novel she wrote. The book became an international bestseller and was translated into seventeen languages. Markandaya's novels are pregnant with different themes and as a woman novelist her novels give us a glimpse of personal life as well Markandaya's novels give a glimpse of all such social issues that have roots in the Indian culture and are still existing in many rural Indian societies.

*A Handful of Rice* is a bolt from blue by Kamala Markandaya to make the readers aware about the plight of people. The author depicts the trauma that people face because of hunger and starvation. The novelist highlights that hunger is the root

cause of all social evils. It forces a person to go from bad to worse. This thing has been highlighted in the character of Ravi.

Markandaya's fifth novel, *A Handful of Rice* revisits the topic of poverty, this time in an urban setting. *The Coffers Dams*, Markandaya's sixth novel, was published in 1969. At the time, the author could not know that her book would pave the way for future activist literature like Arundhati Roy's recent offerings. In her novel, Markandaya explores the struggle Indian tribal nations face when an extensive dam project threatens to destroy their communities. However, Markandaya's characters were round, semi-autobiographical, and aware of their context. Her writing was skilled enough to provide her characters with aids for survival in a battle with her critics.

Although critically mocked for the lack of context in her narratives, the hypocrisy, and disparity between her lifestyle and her self-righteous and moralistic characters. What Kamala Markandaya elucidates well is the fragility of human relationships and the hierarchical nature of Indian society. She gave a prominent representation of Indian Literature in the eyes of the Western world. Her representation of who she is is very well acknowledged in Western society and the community of South Asian writers. Her visibility as a writer existed in her recognition of the state of her country and what needed to be said no matter how bitter it was to say it.

This novel seems to be a sequel to *Nectar in a Sieve*. The novel deal with rural economics, and *A Handful of Rice* deals with urban economics. However, both deal with poverty, hunger, and exploitation in a ruthless society. The deals with poverty and hunger. Every character in the novel fights to get a handful of rice. The novel

begins and ends with the protagonist's fight with poverty and hunger. The story moves around Ravi, who comes to the city to earn. Ravi, the protagonist of the novel runs away from the village because of poverty. Poverty and hunger follow him like shadows. Ravi who comes with the dream of a bright future fails to face the realities of urban life. He does not get an accommodation in the city. But he comes to know that he cannot return to the village.

The village has nothing to offer to the son of a small farmer. "It held out before them like an incandescent carrot. Wherever he goes he faces unemployment. The poverty and hunger push him into the criminal underworld. He joins a gang of criminals like smugglers, bootleggers, and black marketers. Living in poverty, he left his morality. Once heavily drunk he falls into the hands of the Police. To escape he went into the house of a tailor and threatens the old man, Apu, only because of his hunger. This incident changes his life.

The lower middle-class house in which he stays for the night attracts him. The family which satisfies his hunger arouses Ravi's dreams of his own family and delicious meals. Later, his love for Nalini, the daughter of Apu makes him accept the apprenticeship in tailoring offered by Apu. He finds in Ravi the heir of his job. He accepts the proposal of Ravi's marriage to his daughter Nalini as he sees in him the support of his old age. It shows his helplessness which is an outcome of his poverty. The marriage offers Ravi a better way of living. For the next few years, he forgets the hunger, but not poverty. He keeps on dreaming about a better life.

The large family increase disturbs Apu's financial status. The growth of the machine production, threat to Apu's tailoring business. Skilled worker like Apu fights hard to survive in the competition. The garment workers are broken by the

shopkeepers. When Ravi discovers this exploitation made at the hands of the shopkeepers, he gets uncompromising but the experienced Apu tells him the law of It is better to live than die. This jungle law troubles Ravi's life. He finds himself all alone in the jungle. This jungle law makes him aware of the reality. After the birth of the twins, the economic condition decreases.

The members of the family embarrass him by commenting on his failure to run the house. This time poverty attacks so severely. The debts and dues grow heavier day after day. His failure again takes him to Damodar. This time he goes to follow his path. Damodar suggests him to go back to his village. Damodar makes him realize that urban life is poor But Ravi returns home. The frustration of poverty increases day by day. He suspects the chastity of his wife. Nalini cannot tolerate it and leaves the house.

The frustration, due to failure in the fight, against poverty, he even rapes his mother-in-law. Nalini who goes to her sister in protest against her husband's immorality, returns home realizing that she cannot stay in her sister's house who herself is living in poverty. Ravi decides to fight against poverty. He gets engrossed in his work to such an extent that he fails to understand his son's illness. He neglects his son's fever Because of the doctor's bill. But Raju's condition worsens. He is compelled to call the doctor. He hopes that Nalini will survive. He thinks that to be poor is a sin. When Raju, his son, who is on the edge of death asks him questions

He hurries with the crowd towards the Government godown of rice. In the godown, the sight of the rice turns him mad. Kannan, the blacksmith makes him aware that it is a crime to rob the god's rice. But Ravi thinks it is his right to take his rice. It is his children's right. But on the arrival of the police, he runs away without

even a handful of rice. He joins another mob of rebels considering it as another march. When he realizes that they are attacking the rich shops he refuses to throw the brick. He finds it insensible as it will give him neither rice nor grain.

The novel is told as a flashback an elderly Ruku recalls the many events of her life. She begins with her wedding at 12 to a man she'd never met. Fortunately, her husband Nathan is a kind and gentle man who wants to make a good life for his wife and family. Ruku and Nathan have a daughter, Ira, and then after several years of infertility, 5 sons. Nathan hopes to someday own his land and provide a better life for his family, but as the years go by that dream slips farther away. Life is hard but there is enough to eat and the family is happy. Ruku's quiet village is disrupted by the arrival of a tannery. She is unhappy about the changes, but Nathan wisely advises her to learn to adapt so that she will not be broken.

Ruku must soon face other changes as well; Ira must be married and moves far away from her family. The family's crop of rice depends heavily on the rain; however, too much rain brings floods and destroys the rice crop. For the first time, Ruku's family faces severe hunger. Many turn to the tannery for work including Ruku's oldest sons, Arjun and Thambi. Several years after her marriage, Ira returns to her family's home. Her husband has rejected her as she has yet to produce a child.

Desperate to help her daughter and remembering her infertility, Ruku turns to the English doctor Kenny. Sadly, it is too late for Ira her former husband has remarried leaving her without prospects for a future. With Ira's return, the family's resources are stretched even thinner. A sixth son, Kuti, is soon born. Ruku worries Ira will resent the child, but her fears are soon dispelled as Ira acts as a second mother to the boy. Soon after Kuti's birth, Ruku loses her first two sons angry at the harsh

working conditions and low pay at the tannery they help organize a strike, which costs them their jobs. With no work in the village, they are forced to travel to the faraway island of Ceylon to work on tea plantations.

Nature turns on Ruku's family again, this time in the form of drought. The dry conditions lead to widespread hunger. At the height of the drought, Ruku has an unpleasant encounter with her neighbour Kunthi. Kunthi threatens to expose Ruku's greatest secret – her trip to Kenny's clinic for help with her infertility early in her marriage. To silence Kunthi, Ruku must turn over a portion of her precious horde of rice. Days later when Ruku goes to check her rice supply, she discovers much is missing. She flies into a rag only to learn Nathan was the thief. He, too, was being blackmailed by Kunthi – in his youth, he had fathered her sons.

Their secrets are revealed, and Ruku and Nathan forgive one another; however, starvation now seems a certainty. Ruku loses her son Raja to the tannery as well. His dead body is delivered to her home along with the story that he had been caught stealing and collapsed when the guards hit him. Although they doubt the Truth of the story, Ruku and Nathan are powerless to fight against the tannery. The lack of food affects Kuti, Ruku's youngest child. Desperate to save her brother, Ira uses her good looks to attract business as a prostitute among the tannery workers. The family wonders at Kuti's improvement; they do not realize Ira has secretly been feeding him. When Ruku attacks Ira in the night she learns the truth about what her daughter is doing. Once again, Ruku left to accept an unpleasant reality. Kuti's improvement is short lived and Ruku soon faces the death, of their second son. Ira gives birth to a son, Scarabani, a child fathered by one of her clients. Despite his dubious parentage, Ira loves the boy and dotes on him.

The village is slow to accept the child not only is he the son of a prostitute but he is also born an albino and unable to play in the sun like the other children. Ruku's son Selvam shows promise but lacks an occupation. He does not want to depend on the land and enjoys practicing reading and writing. Ruku, who has kept up a friendship with Kenny over the years, asks Kenny to help her son. Kenny plans to train Selvam in medical care and enlists his help in building a clinic for the village. Time and lack of money finally catch up with the family. Years behind in the land dues, Nathan is informed they have only days to leave the only life they've ever known it is being sold to the tannery owners.

It is decided that Nathan and Ruku will travel to live with their son Murugan who has a job as a servant in the city. Selvam offers to care for his sister and her child as Ira is unwilling to take her son to a new place. Ruku and Nathan arrive in the city, overwhelmed by its size and bustle They found a shelter and food at a temple but learn the hard way that the temple is not entirely safe most of their money and possessions are stolen. After an unsuccessful attempt to find Murugan, they learn he has abandoned his wife and child and run away to another city.

Ruku and Nathan decide to return to the village. Ruku enlists the help of a street orphan named Puli to earn the money to get them back to the village Although he has lost his fingers to leprosy, Puli proves to have a hopeful spirit to match Ruku's own. He adopts Ruku and Nathan and stays with them as they work in a rock quarry to earn money. One day, during the monsoon, Nathan collapses in a rain drenched ditch. He is carried back to the temple where he dies in Ruku's arms. Before he passes, he reminds Ruku he will live on through their children. At the novel's end, Ruku returns with Puli to the village. She reunites with her son and daughter and still looks to the future with hope.

## Social Evils

In her first book, *Nectar in a Sieve*, Kamala Markandaya described the hardship of rural women in south India. The conventional system that prevails in rural India means that women must overcome numerous challenges to survive. She criticized how the rural women had handled the challenges. Some of the socioeconomic ills affecting women's lives were highlighted in her book *Nectar in a Sieve* in rural areas sense of self. Castes, prostitution, poverty, inequality, education, the dowry system, unemployment, infertility, the zamindari system, tenant farmers, and money lending are among the societal ills.

The most severe form of these sins caused joint families to break apart and suffer from hunger, malnutrition, degradation, migration, and other problems. In the end, it made the rural women despondent about their futures. According to Kamala Markandaya, pre-independence Indian women were frantically looking for their identities. It ultimately failed due to the numerous barriers in the way. Even if some of the bad has already begun These problems, which have long been present in some areas of south India, took on a significant magnitude before India's independence. In this essay, an effort has been made to identify some of the obstacles to women's identity and its applicability in the twenty-first century. Rukmani was a woman character in Kamala Markandaya's story who overcame obstacles by accepting herself.

When India was just beginning to experience its recently earned freedom, Kamala Markandaya was already writing books. To express their rights, women in rural communities must fight for identity. There is a need to research the dangers evils or difficulties that women confront as they develop various identities in society. It is

commonly known that women in India actively participate in social, cultural, economic, political, and environmental facets of life. Some socioeconomic issues were part of the identity stream that forcefully halted women's identity in the 20th century.

Kamala Markandaya started writing books while India was only beginning to enjoy its freshly attained freedom. Women in rural communities must strive for liberation to assert their rights for identity. The risks, perils, or challenges that women face when they forge different identities in society need to be studied. Women actively participate in social, cultural, economic, political, and environmental aspects of life in India, as is well known. The identity stream that forcibly stopped women's identity in the 20th century included certain financial difficulties.

The patriarchal system, alien population, castes, prostitution, poverty, inequalities, illiteracy, dowry system, unemployment, infertile women, handicap, and others are among these sociological hurdles. The Tenant farmers, the Zamindarisystem and money lenders. Despite India's contributions to science and technology across the board, most of these ills are still very much relevant in the twenty-first century. Some of the popular terms used now to describe women in the globalized era are women's empowerment, women's involvement, and women's identity.

Women are essential contributors to the world's economy, political system, emissaries, and cultural interactions. Every woman must therefore find a way and a technique to build their identity in their line of work. In her debut book, *Nectar in a Sieve*, Kamala Markandaya examines the narrative and unfortunate outcomes. Women's participation in society is crucial for rural areas economic development and prosperity, according to a dissertation in the book *Nectar in a Sieve* As a lessee

Rukmani, a farmer, strives arduously to carve out her individuality in the agricultural industry. She has numerous challenges in rural areas, which reinforced migration and the breakup of joint families there. Indian rural life has been truthfully described in sympathetic and skillful language.

Despite having a predominantly Western outlook, novelist Mrs. Kamala Markandaya brilliantly captured the social obstacles to women's self realization in rural places. Social values, cultural values, economic values, environmental values, and political systems can all help to shape one's self-identity. These constitute the fundamental components of rural women's identities. Land and agriculture, which have various meanings, are often the starting points of conflicts for recognition. due to society being a key factor in developing a woman's identity and one of the materialists for women's empowerment.

The most obvious effects of societal ills included mass migration of people in search of employment, hunger, poverty, illegal activity, famine, destruction of the environment and human life, as well as mortality and the breakdown of families. An effort was made in this dissertation to learn about, analyze critically, and understand the nature and causes of social evils in rural areas. Additionally, an effort was made to clarify the function of modernism and its impact on social issues for the self-realization of a woman in South India her book *Nectar in a Sieve* Kamala Markandaya describes

There are numerous issues with the rural districts of south India, as Kamala Markandaya described in her book *Nectar in a Sieve* These issues or evils are more prevalent than the social side of existence. Rural women's self-realizations were based on the social ideals they had acquired. The identity, purity, and stability of rural

Indian families are a result of these social norms. The author portrayed the truth of societal norms and the tyranny of customs in rural areas which hampered the advancement of women in the modern world. The social norms and rules that makeup customs remain constant over time.

In her book *Nectar in a Sieve*, Kamala Markandaya described the numerous issues that rural areas face. regions of southern India. These issues or evils are more social. Rural women's self-realizations depended on the social ideals they had acquired. Families in rural India's identity, integrity, and stability are a result of these social norms. The author portrayed the truth of rural social ideals and the tyranny of customs that impeded women's advancement in the contemporary world.

The manners and laws of a society are its customs, which remain constant through time and situation. Because of this, women are perpetual victims of a society that is ruled by men. She has various roles to perform in her life. She must become the target as soon as she is born. of remarks about her gender. She must rarely on her father during her formative years. After marriage, a woman depends on her husband, and in her later years, she leans on her son for support. She has obligations to her sons as a mother, to her husband as a wife, and to her father as a daughter. She makes significant sacrifices but endures several male-dominated hardships.

In the context of an entirely male-dominated culture, the normal woman's personality was overwhelmingly supplanted by male-dominated attitudes. an American Even an educated husband treats his wife less like a friend and more like a slave. Indian women who marry must give up their individuality and wait for their husbands' preferences. Even they are powerless to make suggestions without their husbands' permission. However, there are times when their sacrifice for their husband

fails to move a merciless man, and they must endure neglect or if their husband passes away denigration. In *Nectar in a Sieve* Ira, the daughter of Rukmani, is oppressed and ignored by his spouse. anything. Her life was degraded as a result, and her father Nathan's behavior was justified in the eyes of society.

In her book, Kamala Markandaya argues that the Zamindari system, which forces the majority of tenant farmers to pay enforced dues, is a curse for the development of rural society on them. Harassment by the Zamindar who seeks his rent from the tenant farmers is how the novelist depicts crimes committed by the Zamindar on the tenant farmer. When Sivaji arrived to collect his master's debts, his face fell at the sight of the forgiving sky and the tranquil tenant farmers. When Sivaji demanded payment from Nathan, Nathan responded that the crop had failed due to his errant behavior. Finally, Rukmani and Nathan were forced to sell a few earthen pots.

Two brass pots, the tin trunk Rukmani had brought as her bride, two shirts for his sons, and locks of the hall were among the items she brought. The drought persisted until the farmers' situation worsened. The farmer's life was destroyed by unanticipated natural disasters, yet the zamindar had forced him to pay the rent. Shivaji's remarks from Rukmani During the entire time we were tenants on the farm, we never saw the zamindar.

Being a nice, humanitarian man, Sivaji performed for him, and we considered ourselves fortunate. Contrary to some, he did He did not demand bribes from us in the form of food or money, did not demand payment in kind to the last grain, let us keep the gleanings, or assert that there was no animosity between us. The manners and laws of a society are its customs, but when they don't evolve, they start to rule. Customs' oppression causes the populace several issues. Its dowry One of the customs that is

bad for society is the system. In *Nectar in a Sieve* Rukmani's debut book, she is required to give her daughter Ira a hundred rupee dowry. The dowry system destroys families and contributes to social unrest. In her book, Mrs. Kamala Markandaya said The dowry system is used as an example of When Rukmani learns she has given birth, she closes her eyes. because she is aware that her husband prefers a son. Who will desire a daughter as a firstborn is the thought that causes her worry.

This mindset partly results from the strict dowry system. They'll probably demand a sizable dowry, I remarked unhappily. We have none more one hundred rupees will not procure such a husband Rukmani, a woman steeped in tradition, disapproves of the way the tannery is built. She discovers that the tannery contributes to the ugly, filthy, and cruel atmosphere of the village. She observes, This tannery had a tremendous sweeping development. It expanded, grew, and prospered. Not for a month, but for the entire year, a sizable area of farmland was consumed. The tannery and living quarters are built in place of the pastures.

The local population was exterminated, and strangers were forced to live in the countryside. Due to changes in rural areas' demographics, the landscape's physical characteristics have changed. Kamala Markandaya's books. Characters like Kamala Markandaya, who are typically from the middle class or lower class, are rarely aware of the harm done by the alien population. presence of outsiders scene of depravity, social squalor, and moral degradation. Prices soar as a result of a trade between the tannery workers and the village traders.

They had according to Rukmani. Children were everywhere, avoiding the crowd when the aliens arrived in the village, the author of the book observes. and screaming inexplicably excitedly to one another. that were startled contributed to the

din. We gathered in a circle near the first Upon arrival, there were about fifteen men unloading bricks from the bullock carts. Although they spoke in our language, their intonation was difficult for us to understand Those who are disowned by their husband, parents, or guardian are considered fallen women. Rejection of a barren woman might cause more serious issues for both the individual and society.”As if he owned us. At this Rukmani thinks that already he foresees his livelihood being wrested from him,for he salts and tans his own skins making them into chapils for those in the village who wear them” (NIAS 26)

The way Mrs. Kamala Markandaya depicts barren women and how society rejects them is quite striking. In *Nectar in a Sieve* Irrawaddy, the daughter of a peasant lady Rukmani, is rejected by her husband because she is infertile. Because he acts by established social norms, her husband is condemned. You married me off to your daughter. She has been returned to you Nathan and Rukmani. She is an infertile woman. Old Granny, one of the book's minor female characters, is a pitiful person who must endure poverty till she dies. Despite starving, she maintains her faith in God.

The same is true for Ammu, who is abandoned by her husband Murugan, leading to her downfall as a woman. Ammu maintains her fortitude and endurance. She wonderfully provides for her kids. Ammu was a very young girl who was when Rukmani traveled to the city to look for her son Murugan. It serves as a defense for rural women's acceptance and tolerance of hardship. Indeed the author's realism serves a purpose and she wants to make polite society more aware of the real issues.

The oldest child of Rukmani and Nathan is Irrawaddy. She is one of the key characters who suffer from famine, hunger, and other forms of human degradation.

She stands in for those tragically lost ladies for whom society, not themselves, is to blame for their misfortunes. She also represents love and sacrifice because she sells her body to support her brother. She is therefore not to blame for her problems. Ira in *Nectar in a Sieves* is the sweet, submissive, and diligent daughter of Rukmani and Nathan, a couple who make their living by working in the fields.

She focused on her younger brother when the famine started. To save her brother, she sells her body to the tannery workers. She disregarded morality and disobeyed her mother, who is watching helplessly, but her silent sacrifice demonstrates the lengths to which a girl will go to help her family members. The issue of the single mother has drawn the attention of the novelist, to whom shame, ignominy, and dishonor are associated.

The author of the tale emphasizes how moral standards for men and women are the same. Anita Desai's works make pleas for unmarried mothers and show more societal pity and respect for them. Like Mrs. Kamala Markandaya, she likewise argued for the societal respect of unmarried mothers who are also single. It shouldn't be embarrassing for her to have an illegitimate child any longer. There are only two options available to a woman who becomes pregnant before marriage either she will die or turn to prostitution. By providing a higher dowry the author hopes to restore the fallen woman. She cited someone as stating,

Mrs. Kamala Markandaya has also skillfully presented the issues facing the disabled. Her books have several physically challenged characters. Ira gives birth to a child who is albino in *Nectar in a Sieve*. The character Puli has just stumps for fingers in the same book. The illness that is degrading his body has consumed his first knuckle's nail and flesh. Mrs. Kamala Markandaya has described the disabled

character in such a way that society has attempted to avoid the dejection born out of such conditions despite their physical abnormalities. If these characters lose their hearts, it is because of other issues; they are nice people who work hard. Thus, the disabled characters in the author's book are capable of battling their fate. Despite his physical abnormalities, the novelist claimed that the handicapped Puli had helped to ensure the safety of Rukmani's possessions.

Whatever we earned, we trusted him with,  
 and the theft of the cash from my sari,  
 while I was sleeping, had not only jeopardized  
 my Nathan was the only one who  
 had confidence, and Puli was better equipped to  
 take care of it than either of us was'' (NIAS 132).

The caste system in Indian society makes Mrs. Markandaya's characters miserable. Sometimes the person has to make a sacrifice for it. In *Nectar in a Sieve* Rukmani, a traditionalist character, objected to Arjun and Thambi working at the tannery because they did not come from the untouchable caste. The novelist does a wonderful job of expressing the conflicts between the rich and the poor. The conflict between the wealthy and the poor is an outcome of social inequality. Kamala Markandaya portrayed the main figures from both classes. The lower echelons of society have produced some of history's greatest heroes and heroines. She makes an effort to emphasize that the underprivileged shouldn't be mocked. Indian and East European books frequently address poverty.

People in the villages experience hunger pangs and go through several unpleasant encounters along the way. The majority of Indo- Anglian novelists have attempted to describe hunger as a theme. The author of *Nectar in a Sieve* explores the destitution of peasant farmers in South India. The agony of a natural calamity and human-made wrongs like exploitation were the root causes of poverty. It tells the tale of the peasant farmers Nathan and Rukmani. Because of their lack of resources, they are compelled to move about in quest of sustenance. Arjun and Murugan also travel to Ceylon in search of employment. Rural living is difficult due to unemployment and poverty, degraded as a result of immigration and immoral behavior. Farmers' land is swallowed up by tanneries through expensive purchases. Both their mud houses and their land are taken away from them.

In this fashion, the peasants were uprooted and moved to the city. The family eventually broke apart, and this symbolically represents the breakdown of the agricultural way of life in India as a result of Westernization. An unequal income group emerged in the villages as a result of land acquisition, fragmentation, and displacement. As a result of the establishment of the rich-poor gap in society, countless conflicts between them resulted in tragedies for both classes.

The numerous pains and issues in rural areas were caused by inequalities. In conclusion, it can be concluded that a variety of societal ills existed in India before independence that hampered women's ability to express their identities. It is widely believed that the social evils are essentially a result of terrible living conditions and the tyranny of traditions. The societal ills in rural areas prevented women from realizing their potential. Patriarchal system, alien population, castes, prostitution, poverty, inequality, illiteracy, dowry system, unemployment, infertility, disability,

zamindari system, tenant farmers, and money lending were the most dangerous societal ills of the 20th century.

Due to the presence of these societal ills, there has been a massive influx of migration, which has caused family dislocation and the breakdown of joint families in rural areas. The rural land, environment, life and death, tradition, and modernization were all impacted in a cascading manner by these forces. The novel fights against despair and the evils are conquered with acceptance, tolerance, positive, and encouraging modern views because the novelist is very concerned with the hard reality of the lower layer of society. India, one of the economies with the fastest growth rates in the world, must embrace the encroaching modernity while keeping traditional values that do not hinder the individuality of women.

Modernity has some influence over societal ills and the development of women's identity in the twenty-first century. This will pave the way for India to rule the digital future. Themes abound in Markandaya's writings, and since she is a female author, we also get a glimpse into her private life. The novels by Markandaya offer a view of all these societal problems that have their origins in Indian culture and are still present in many rural Indian civilizations. Kamala Markandaya's book *A Handful of Rice* is a bolt from the blue that educates readers about human suffering.

The author illustrates the suffering caused by hunger and malnutrition. The author of the work emphasizes that hunger is the underlying cause of all social ills. It compels someone to deteriorate more. The character of Ravi has made this point clear. The emblem of the nourishment that everyone on earth requires is a handful of rice. Unfortunately, the vast majority of males are denied it. The novelist has utilized

rice appropriately because it is the staple food of all social levels, especially in South India.

The narrative of a destitute man named Ravi is told in the book. Ravi is shown in the story as being extremely desperate to change his luck from the very beginning. So, in search of a better income, he relocates from a small rural village to the city. Ravi is shown as a disobedient, independent, and tenacious individual who will stop at nothing to alter his destiny. The state of Indian social values, as described by Mukherjee Meenakshi, is as follows The modern Indian is split between the dominance of social order and the growth of the individual. Duty to the family and personal fulfillment are sometimes the two concerns that neatly settle the problem. Even though it may be a desirable objective in terms of the individualistic ideals of Western society, Indian tradition has always been hostile to the pursuit of self-fulfillment, especially when it comes at the expense of family obligations.

Markandaya highlights the negative effects of hunger and poverty. Hunger is what drives people to degrade themselves to such extremes. The reality that hunger forces a person to choose the path of crime is a subject the book explores freely. The novel's protagonist, Ravi Shanker, first appears in the first scene. He is inebriated and threatens to break into a residence with the words It is evident from the sentences above that the protagonist appears to be threatening the owner because he is so ravenous. He also believes that integrity and prosperity are incompatible. Ravi works tirelessly to support himself in legal ways.

When Raju, his son, who is on the verge of the death asks him questions “Do you like me? Why do you like me?” (*AHFR* 229) Ravi turns speechless. Ravi loves him from the depth of his heart. But in his struggle against poverty and hunger he

forgets his son. He feels that it is not he but the society in which he lives is responsible for the death of his son. He finds the society guilty of the murder. He decides to free himself from betraying ramshackle codes. He decides to give children their rights once when his son

However, he is unsuccessful, and he accuses society of being to blame for everything bad that happens to him and his family. A fake society destroys him of the comments on Ravi's predicament, saying: "Caught between the pull of the old tradition, which almost chokes him, and the pull of the new immorality, which attracts as well as frightens him, "Ravi sawys from one side to the other,taking the worst of both" ( *AHFR* 66 ) The author of the book conveys this idea through the life of Ravi Shankar, the main character, by showing how vital and valuable mental serenity is in comparison to timely financial gain. Ravi is the one who realizes this. when he moves to the city but fails to get wealthy. He doesn't acquire anything there; in fact, he loses even his morality. The tale is filled with both exciting and sorrowful moments.

According to K.Venkata Reddy; The fight between tradition and modernity, as in *A Silence of Desire*, or between East and West, as in *Inner Some Fury*, Inner, is not what gives *A Handful of Rice* its sad tone; rather, it is the human conscience's agonizing struggle to choose between right and wrong. The core of the book is centered on this conflict in Ravi's conscience. His active conscience must decide between being impoverished and respectable and being opulently disrespectful. He wants to be honest, but he also knows that being honest won't buy him any rice or cover The narrative makes it clear that societal ills are becoming more prevalent in modern civilizations. Ravi discovers injustice throughout society.

It demonstrates that while the poor get poorer, the privileged get richer. Ravi suffered from social injustice in society as well. As a result, Kamala Markandaya discusses the book *A Handful of Rice*. Because the setting of this novel is actual, it can be seen as a depressing and anxious one. Outside of our world, there is well. The author emphasizes that urban poverty is more frightening and destructive than rural poverty. In contrast to the cities, where they are turned to ashes, inhabitants in the villages at least retain their individuality. The author of the book makes an effort to emphasize that man is also somewhat to blame for other injustices. Man's hunger and the depravity that results. A major societal injustice has occurred.

Kamala Markandaya pays close attention to, examines, and considers how social and economic circumstances affect her characters. She watches how people act and feel in social situations. Her books explore a range of human follies, errors, and relationships. Her primary goal is to highlight social issues that are directly tied to human life. She exposes the social ills and educates people about their negative effects. The two books that can be read together are *A Handful of Rice* and *Nectar in a Sieve*.

The effects of social ills and evils are depicted in Markandaya's two realistic works. Kamala Markandaya's novels *The Handful of Rice* and *Nectar in a Sieve* both deal with the struggles and challenges faced by rural Indian communities and highlight several social evils prevalent in Indian society. *In The Handful of Rice* the main social evils depicted are Poverty The novel portrays the poverty and deprivation faced by the rural poor in India, who struggle to make ends meet in the face of economic hardship, food scarcity, and lack of access to basic resources and services.

The novel highlights the corruption and exploitation that is rampant in Indian society, particularly in the political and bureaucratic spheres. The wealthy and powerful use their positions of influence to extract resources and labor from the poor, exacerbating the poverty and deprivation faced by vulnerable communities. The novel also addresses issues of discrimination and marginalization, particularly about caste and religion. The lowercase characters in the novel are subjected to discrimination and social ostracization, while religious tensions and conflicts are also depicted.

Poverty and Destitution faced by rural Indian communities, who struggle to make ends meet in the face of economic hardship, food scarcity, and lack of access to basic resources and services. The novel highlights the social and economic inequalities that exist in Indian society, particularly about caste and gender. The main character, Rukmani, is from a lower caste and faces discrimination and marginalization as a result. The novel also explores the theme of exploitation, as poor and vulnerable communities are often taken advantage of by those in positions of power and authority. The landowners and moneylenders in the novel are depicted as exploitative and callous, using their power to extract as much labor and resources as possible from the poor.

The novel also addresses the issue of patriarchy and the subjugation of women in Indian society. Rukmani and other female characters in the novel are expected to conform to strict gender roles and are often denied opportunities for education or self-determination. Overall, both *The Handful of Rice* and *Nectar in a Sieve* highlight the deep-rooted social evils and challenges faced by rural Indian communities, and shed light on the complex web of social, economic, and political structures that perpetuate inequality and injustice. Both *The Handful of Rice* and *Nectar in a Sieve* depict the struggles and challenges faced by their characters as they navigate poverty, social

inequality, and other forms of adversity. Some of the key struggles depicted in the novels include.

The characters in both novels struggle to make ends meet and provide for themselves and their families. They face food scarcity, and lack of access to basic resources and services, and often have to resort to exploitative means to survive. Discrimination and marginalization: Both novels highlight the discrimination and marginalization faced by individuals from lower castes or lower social classes. The characters in both novels face social and economic barriers to advancement and are often denied opportunities for education or self-determination.

The characters in both novels are frequently exploited by those in positions of power and authority. They are often subjected to unfair labor practices, forced to work in harsh and dangerous conditions, and are paid unfairly or not at all for their work. Gender roles and patriarchy: Both novels explore the theme of patriarchy and the Indian society. Female characters in both novels are expected to conform to strict gender roles and are often denied opportunities for education or self-determination. They are also subject to sexual harassment, violence, and other forms of abuse.

Environmental degradation *Nectar in a Sieve* also depicts the struggles faced by rural communities in the face of environmental degradation. The characters are forced to contend with droughts, floods, and other natural disasters, which exacerbate their economic and social struggles. Overall, both the novels depict the struggles and challenges faced by individuals and communities in the face of poverty, social inequality, and other forms of adversity. The novels highlight the resilience and resourcefulness of their characters, as well as how social, economic, and political structures can perpetuate injustice and inequality The main theme of Kamala

Markandaya's novel *Nectar in a Sieve* is the struggle for survival in the face of poverty and social injustice.

The novel follows the life of Rukmani, a poor peasant woman living in rural India during the early 20th century. Throughout the novel, Rukmani and her family face numerous challenges as they try to make a living from their small patch of land. Some of the key themes explored in the novel include The novel portrays the crushing poverty faced by rural communities in India during the early 20th century. Rukmani, and her family struggle to make ends meet, facing food scarcity, lack of access to basic resources and services, and the constant threat of eviction and displacement.

Social injustice as Rukmani and her family face discrimination and marginalization as a result of their lower caste status. They are denied opportunities for education and self-determination and are often exploited by those in positions of power and authority. Resilience and resourcefulness Despite the many challenges they face, Rukmani and her family display remarkable resilience and resourcefulness. They work hard to eke out a living from their small patch of land and find creative ways to cope with the many obstacles they encounter.

Motherhood and the importance of family in the face of adversity. Rukmani is a devoted mother and wife, and her relationships with her children and husband form the emotional heart of the novel. Overall, *Nectar in a Sieve* is a powerful portrayal of the struggles faced by poor and marginalized communities in rural India during the early Twentieth century. Through the experiences of Rukmani and her family, the novel highlights the resilience and resourcefulness of those who must contend with poverty and social injustice daily. The main theme of Kamala Markandaya's novel *The Handful of Rice* is the struggle for survival in the face of poverty and social injustice.

The novel is set in post-independence India and follows the life of a poor rural farmer named Ravi. Some of the key themes explored in the novel include.

*A Handful of Rice* which portrays the extreme poverty and economic struggles faced by rural communities in India. Ravi and his family struggle to make ends meet facing food scarcity, lack of access to basic resources and services, and the constant threat of eviction and displacement. The novel explores the theme of corruption and exploitation, as Ravi and his family are constantly taken advantage of by those in positions of power and authority. They are exploited by moneylenders, landowners, and corrupt government officials who take advantage of their poverty and vulnerability.

The novel also highlights the social injustice faced by those in lower castes and lower social classes. Ravi and his family face discrimination and marginalization and are denied opportunities for education and self-determination. The novel also explores the theme of the struggle for dignity, as Ravi and his family fight to maintain their self-respect and preserve their dignity in the face of poverty and social injustice. Overall, this novel is a powerful portrayal of the struggles faced by poor and marginalized communities in post-independence India.

Through the experiences of Ravi and his family, the novel highlights the resilience and resourcefulness of those who must contend with poverty and social injustice daily and the enduring struggle for dignity and self-determination. A sieve is a utensil used to strain liquids, and it has many small holes that allow the liquid to pass through while trapping solid particles. When one tries to put rice and nectar into a sieve, they will quickly pass through the holes, leaving nothing behind.

In the context of society, the handful of rice and nectar represents the necessities of life, such as food, water, shelter, and healthcare. The sieve represents the limited resources that are available to provide for these necessities. When resources are scarce, it becomes difficult for society to sustain itself, and people may struggle to meet their basic needs. The metaphor highlights the importance of resource management and the need for equitable distribution of resources. It also underscores the challenges faced by societies with limited resources and the need for innovation and creative solutions to address these challenges.

The metaphor of the *Handful of Rice* and nectar in a sieve highlights the social problems that can arise when a society has limited resources to meet its basic needs. Some of the social problems that can be faced in this situation include. Poverty When resources are scarce, it can be difficult for people to make ends meet, leading to poverty and economic insecurity. Hunger and malnutrition Limited resources can also result in food shortages and malnutrition, particularly among vulnerable populations such as children and the elderly. Health problems: Limited resources can lead to inadequate healthcare, which can result in the spread of diseases and other health problems.

Inequality Scarce resources can exacerbate existing social inequalities, as those with more resources may be better able to meet their needs, while those with fewer resources may struggle to survive. When resources are scarce, it can lead to competition and conflict over access to those resources, which can result in social unrest and even violence Migration: Limited resources can also lead to migration as people seek better economic opportunities and access to resources in other areas.

Overall, the metaphor of the handful of rice and nectar in a sieve highlights the importance of addressing social problems related to resource scarcity and the need for innovative solutions to meet the basic needs of all members of society. After independence, many countries faced significant social and economic challenges, including limited resources to meet the basic needs of their populations. Here are some of the problems faced by countries in the post are potrayed in both the plays

Many countries faced high levels of poverty after independence, with limited resources to invest in economic development and poverty reduction programs. Food insecurity: Limited agricultural productivity, coupled with rapidly growing populations, often resulted in food shortages and insecurity. Health challenges Many newly independent countries faced health challenges such as high infant and maternal mortality rates, low life expectancy, and inadequate healthcare infrastructure. Education was often limited in the post-independence era, with limited resources to invest in schools and teachers.

Corruption was a significant problem in many newly independent countries, diverting resources away from development and contributing to social and economic inequality. Political instability Many newly independent countries struggled with political instability, often due to conflicts over resources and power. These challenges were compounded by factors such as colonialism, exploitation, and external debt, which further limited the resources available to post-independence governments. Overcoming these challenges required innovative solutions, effective governance, and international support. Some countries have made significant progress in addressing these challenges, while others continue to face them today.

The economic problem faced in the metaphor of the handful of rice and nectar in a sieve is the challenge of allocating scarce resources efficiently. When resources are limited, it can be difficult to meet the basic needs of the population and promote economic growth and development. Some of the specific economic problems that can arise in this situation include Limited investment: When resources are scarce, it can be challenging to attract investment to support economic growth and development. Unemployment: Limited resources can also result in high levels of unemployment, as businesses struggle to expand and create new jobs. Inflation When resources are scarce, prices can rise as demand outstrips supply leading to inflation.

Scarce resources can exacerbate economic inequality, as those with more resources are better able to invest in economic opportunities and grow their wealth, while those with fewer resources may be left behind. Limited access to credit: Scarce resources can also make it difficult for businesses and individuals to access credit, which can limit their ability to invest in economic opportunities. Overall, the economic problem posed by the handful of rice and nectar in a sieve is the challenge of allocating scarce resources effectively to promote economic growth and development. This requires effective resource management, innovative solutions, and a focus on creating opportunities for all members of society to participate in the economy.

*A Handful of Rice* is a novel by Kamala Markandaya that explores the life of a poor Indian farmer named Ravi. The book addresses several social issues that were prevalent in India during the time the novel was written. Some of these social problems include Poverty is a major theme in the novel, as Ravi struggles to make ends meet and provide for his family. The poverty in the book reflects the broader

issue of poverty in India, which has long been a problem due to factors such as uneven economic growth and lack of access to education and job opportunities.

The caste system is another social problem addressed in the novel. Ravi is from a lower caste, which limits his opportunities and creates social barriers. The novel shows how the caste system can be used to justify discrimination and unequal treatment: The novel also explores gender inequality, particularly regarding the treatment of women. Ravi's wife, Selvi, is expected to be subservient to her husband and is not given the same opportunities as men. The book highlights the struggle for women's rights in India, which has been an ongoing issue.

Land ownership is a significant issue in the novel, as Ravi struggles to maintain ownership of his land in the face of pressure from moneylenders and corrupt officials. The book touches on the broader issue of land ownership in India, where many farmers face challenges in holding onto their land due to factors such as land grabbing and displacement. Corruption The novel also addresses corruption, particularly in the form of corrupt officials and moneylenders who take advantage of the poor. The book highlights the role of corruption in perpetuating poverty and inequality in India.

Overall, *A Handful of Rice* is a powerful exploration of the social problems faced by many people in India during the mid-20th century. The book's themes remain relevant today, as many of these issues continue to be major challenges in India and other countries around the world. *Nectar in a Sieve* is a novel by Kamala Markandaya that portrays the life of a poor Indian peasant family in the 1950s. The story highlights various social problems that were prevalent in rural India during that time. Some of the social issues addressed in the novel are: The novel depicts the

harsh reality of poverty that was pervasive in rural India. The protagonist, Rukmani, and her family live in abject poverty and struggle to make ends meet.

The lack of necessities such as food, shelter, and clothing is a significant issue for the rural population. Landlessness is another critical social problem depicted in the novel. The rural poor are often landless, and they have to work as laborers on the lands of wealthy landlords. This leads to exploitation, as the landlords pay the laborers very low wages. Gender discrimination is another social issue addressed in the novel. Women are often treated as inferior to men and are denied equal opportunities for education and employment. Rukmani and her daughter, Ira, face discrimination from their family and society.

Education is essential for social mobility, but in rural India, access to education is limited. The novel highlights the lack of educational opportunities for the rural poor, especially for girls. Child marriage is a social issue depicted in the novel. Rukmani is married off at a young age, and her daughter, Puli, is also forced into marriage at a young age. Child marriage deprives girls of education and opportunities and often leads to early pregnancies and health problems.

*Nectar in a Sieve* sheds light on the social problems prevalent in rural India in the 1950s. These issues are still relevant today and need to be addressed to create a more equitable society. Both the novels by that highlight the struggles of Indian peasants in the post-independence period. The two novels depict several social issues that were prevalent in rural India during that time. Some of the social issues addressed in both novels.

Both the novels depict the harsh reality of poverty that was pervasive in rural India. The protagonists and their families live in abject poverty and struggle to make

ends meet. critical social problem addressed in both novels. The rural poor are often landless, and they have to work as labourers on the lands of wealthy landlords. This leads to exploitation, as the landlords pay the labourers very low wages. Gender discrimination: Gender discrimination is another social issue addressed in both novels.

Women are often treated as inferior to men and are denied equal opportunities for education and employment. Lack of education: Education is essential for social mobility, but in rural India, access to education is limited. Both novels highlight the lack of educational opportunities for the rural poor, especially for girls. Child marriage is a social issue depicted in both novels. The protagonists and their families have to deal with the consequences of early marriage and its impact on their lives. Exploitation by moneylenders The rural poor often have to borrow money from moneylenders at exorbitant interest rates, which leads to debt bondage and exploitation. Both novels depict how the families of the protagonists fall into the trap of moneylenders and have to suffer the consequences.

*A Handful of Rice* and *Nectar in a Sieve* shed light on the social problems prevalent in rural India in the post-independence period. These issues are still relevant today and need to be addressed to create a more equitable society. Both the novels that depict the struggles of Indian peasants in the post-independence period. These novels highlight several problems that emerged in rural India after independence. Some of the post-independence problems addressed in both novels are After independence, poverty continued to be a pervasive issue in rural India. Both novels depict the harsh reality of poverty and the struggles of the rural poor to make ends meet.

After independence, the Indian government introduced land reforms to address the issue of landlessness and to provide land to landless peasants. However, the implementation of these reforms was often flawed and led to conflicts between the landlords and the peasants. Both novels depict the struggles of the rural poor to acquire land and the conflicts that arise in the process. After independence, there was a significant shift in the population from rural to urban areas in search of better opportunities. Both novels depict the impact of urbanization on rural communities and the challenges faced by those who migrate to the cities.

Indian government pursued a policy of industrialization to promote economic growth. However, this led to the displacement of the rural poor from their lands and their traditional occupations. Both novels depict the impact of industrialization on rural communities and the challenges faced by those who are displaced. Caste system: After independence, the Indian government introduced measures to abolish the caste system and promote social equality. However, the caste system continued to be a pervasive issue in rural India. Both novels depict the impact of the caste system on rural communities and the struggles of the oppressed castes to achieve social equality.

The novels *A Handful of Rice* and *Nectar in a Sieve* shed light on the post-independence problems that emerged in rural India. These issues are still relevant today, and efforts need to be made to address them to create a more equitable society. In *A Handful of Rice* and *Nectar in a Sieve* Kamala Markandaya highlights several social evils that emerged in post-independence India. These social evils were prevalent in rural areas and affected the lives of the rural poor. Some of the social evils depicted in both novels are:

The rural poor often had to borrow money from moneylenders at exorbitant interest rates, which led to debt bondage and exploitation. This was a significant social evil in rural areas and affected the lives of the protagonists and their families in both novels. Gender discrimination: Women were often treated as inferior to men and were denied equal opportunities for education and employment. This social evil was prevalent in both urban and rural areas and affected the lives of the female characters in both novels. Child marriage was a prevalent social evil in post-independence India, particularly in rural areas. Both novels depict the consequences of early marriage and its impact on the lives of the protagonists.

Although the Indian government introduced measures to abolish the caste system, it continued to be a pervasive social evil in rural areas. Both novels depict the impact of the caste system on the lives of the protagonists and the struggles of the oppressed castes to achieve social equality. Landlords often exploited the rural poor by paying them very low wages and forcing them to work in harsh conditions. This social evil affected the lives of the protagonists and their families in both novels.

Overall, *A Handful of Rice* and *Nectar in a Sieve* shed light on the social evils that were prevalent in post-independence India, particularly in rural areas. These social evils continue to affect the lives of people in rural areas today, and efforts need to be made to address them to create a more equitable society. In *A Handful of Rice* Kamala Markandaya portrays several social evils that were prevalent in rural India during the post-independence period. These social evils are depicted through the lives of the novel's main characters, particularly the protagonist, Ravi.

One of the most prominent social evils depicted in the novel is the exploitation of the rural poor by moneylenders. Ravi's family is forced to borrow money from the

local moneylender, Ramappa, at exorbitant interest rates to survive. As a result, they fall into debt bondage, and Ramappa becomes their master. The novel highlights the plight of the rural poor who are trapped in debt bondage and the vicious cycle of poverty and exploitation that results from it. Another social evil depicted in the novel is gender discrimination. Ravi's sister, Meena, is denied an education and forced into early marriage, which limits her opportunities and stifles her potential.

She is subjected to abuse and mistreatment by her husband, who sees her as inferior to him. The novel highlights the struggles of women in rural India and the limitations imposed on them by society. Agriculture is the main occupation in the village. Infact Kamala Markandaya did not depict the big landlords and agriculturists but the life of landless farmers who are also the neglected people. The landless farmers, in particular are held in the clutches of constant fear, as the land being snatched away, the failure or excesses of rains, droughts etc.

As compared to city, in village, it is quite difficult to accept a woman without child or a woman with a daughter but without a son. In rural society the life of a woman, who has no children at all is worse. The husband in the rural area has the social sanction to discard his barren wife. So Ira's husband discarded her by saying her a barren. While Socio-religious forces create problems of acceptability and respectability for the childless woman, absence of money for survival drives her to prostitution, as happens in the case of Ira. Prostitution is a major social problem today in both urban and rural areas. Ira wants to save her ailing brother.

She is fed up of poverty and hunger. Kunthi, a village woman also takes to prostitution. Nathan calls Ira a 'harlot' and never touches even food that is bought out of Ira's earnings. Markandaya portrays the fate of the prostitutes very realistically "Bt

the man who finds a woman in the street, raises his eyebrow and snaps his fingers so that she follows him, throws few coins that he may possess her, holds her unresisting whatever he has paid for. In this novel most of the characters are rural, just like, Rukmani, Nathan, Ira, Kali, Kunthi, old Granny, Janaki and many more nameless characters have an unmistakable rural bearing. Their attitude, vision of life, manners and language belong to the countryside.

The villagers have many beliefs. It is believed that Cobra are sacred, and hence they should not be killed. Nathan, though, illiterate, does not believe that. The rural people take pride in having more children, considering it not only a concrete testimony of divine blessing but also a fortune in having more hands to work on the farm. When Rukmini fails to get any child after Ira, her mother takes her to temple, then they pray together, before the deity for the son. She also gives Rukmini “a small stone lingam”, a symbol of fertility. The belief paves way for customs. Rukmini is faithfully devoted to her husband, does not call him by his name but address him only as husband.

The standard of living of rural people is almost primitive. Nathan’s house is a small thatched mud hut near a paddy field in the vicinity of a couple of similar huts. A garland of mango leaves is a symbol of happiness and good fortune. So they always hang this kind of garland across the doorway. The hut has two rooms, one is used as a storehouse for grain and another is for everything else. The popular means of transport is the bullock cart, moving in the midst of sights and sounds from nature, which makes the journey enjoyable to both animals and passengers.

In *Nectar in a Sieve*, says A.V. Krishna Rao, Markandaya dramatizes the tragedy of a traditional Indian village and a peasant family assaulted by

industrialisation Rukmani and Nathan, the peasant couple in a South Indian village, are the victims of the two evils zamindari system and the industrial economy. Nathan, a landless farmer, has to live on the mercy of the zamindar. The tragic picture of hunger is pointed out by Markandaya, when Rukmini divides food into 24 small parts to feed the entire family for an equal number of days. Such starvation leads to human degradation. Ira seeing her family starve during the famine turns into a woman of the street and gives birth to an illegitimate albino child. Hunger makes Ira a prostitute; hunger leads to suspected theft of a calfskin by Raja and his subsequent death. Starvation forces Kunthi's death.

The problem of poverty has been realistically depicted by Markandaya the adverse physical condition like, drought make Nathan unable to pay his land revenue. Puli has to face poverty and go on begging because he has one to support and care for. Puli engages himself in petty crimes when he fails to get any alms. Murugan engages himself in gambling. Superstitions and beliefs are a result of illiteracy. The villagers have many blind beliefs. But Nathan though not educated, does not believe that. The rural people feel proud in having more children, considering it not only a concrete testimony of divine blessing but also a fortune in that there will be more hands to work on the farm. In this novel, Kamala Markandaya disapprove the superstitious practices of the rural people.

When rain was not enough for the field work, Rukmani throws herself on the ground, prays, offers a pumpkin and a few grains of rice to the goddess, but no rains come. Markandaya gives a very realistic and touching description of such fear "The calamities of the land belong to its alone, born of wind and rain and weather, immensities not to be tempered by man or his creations. To those who live by the land

there must always come time of hardship, of fear and hunger. A farmer has no hopes for the future, but yet he keeps hope, amidst fear of getting disappointment.

In a traditional Indian family, woman is always subordinate to the man. While the sons are considered as assets and the daughter are considered as a burden on a family. When the first born child was a daughter, Rukmini was very much disappointed “for what woman want a girl for her first born”. Nathan wanted a son to continue his line and walk beside him on the land, not a pulling infant who would take with her dowry and leave nothing but a memory behind Rukmini thinks that it was a punishment for her past sins In the village, much more than in city, a childless woman is considered an ill-fated one. The life of a woman who had no children at all, is more worse.

The caste system is also portrayed as a social evil in the novel. Ravi's family belongs to a lower caste and faces discrimination and social exclusion as a result. They are denied access to basic resources such as water and are forced to live in a segregated area. The novel highlights the impact of the caste system on the lives of the rural poor and the struggle for social equality. Exploitation by landlords is another social evil depicted in the novel. Ravi and his family are forced to work as laborers on a landlord's farm, where they are paid very low wages and subjected to harsh working conditions. The novel portrays the plight of the rural poor who are trapped in a system of exploitation and poverty.

Overall, *A Handful of Rice* portrays several social evils that were prevalent in rural India during the post-independence period. These social evils continue to affect the lives of people in rural areas today, and the novel serves as a reminder of the need to address these issues to create a more equitable society. In *Nectar in a Sieve* Kamala

Markandaya portrays several social evils that were prevalent in rural India during the post-independence period. These social evils are depicted through the lives of the novel's main characters, particularly the protagonist, Rukmani. One of the most prominent social evils depicted in the novel is poverty.

Rukmani and her family struggle to make ends meet and are often forced to go hungry. The novel highlights the impact of poverty on the lives of the rural poor and the struggle to survive in harsh conditions. Another social evil depicted in the novel is gender discrimination. Rukmani is denied an education and forced into early marriage, which limits her opportunities and stifles her potential. She is subjected to abuse and mistreatment by her husband, who sees her as inferior to him. The novel highlights the struggles of women in rural India and the limitations imposed on them by society.

The caste system is also portrayed as a social evil in the novel. Rukmani's family belongs to a lower caste and faces discrimination and social exclusion as a result. They are denied access to basic resources such as water and are forced to live in a segregated area. The novel highlights the impact of the caste system on the lives of the rural poor and the struggle for social equality. Exploitation by landlords is another social evil depicted in the novel. Rukmani and her husband are forced to work as laborers on a landlord's farm, where they are paid very low wages and subjected to harsh working conditions. The novel portrays the plight of the rural poor who are trapped in a system of exploitation and poverty.

Finally, the novel also depicts the impact of urbanization and modernization on rural India. The introduction of new technologies and industries leads to displacement and the loss of traditional ways of life. The novel highlights the struggle

to adapt to changing times and the loss of cultural identity . *Nectar in a Sieve* portrays several social evils that were prevalent in rural India during the post-independence period. These social evils continue to affect the lives of people in rural areas today, and the novel serves as a reminder of the need to address these issues to create a more equitable society.

## Women Perception

The male-dominated society in India is focused on, which acknowledges male dominance and female subordination. The majority of the role belongs to men. And a woman who must accept a supporting position, stays in the background. It is expected that she will transform herself to fit the family she has married into and meld her personality with her husband. She transforms into her husband shadow and stays at his side throughout life. She is expected to stand by him in any condition, bolstering his strength with hers.

She calls her husband with reverence in bed because she considers him to be an idol; she worships him and makes his food. She holds a lot of details attesting to the continuity of the husband. To avoid the hardships of widowhood, she also yearns for her husband. The guidelines she learns about kitchen politeness, decorum, order, and fragrance from her mother. This is what she sees as her potential future. This is the mentality that a girl develops in her early years. She is trained to be submissive, devoted, and forgiving to establish herself as the ideal wife, not only for her partner but also for her mother-in-law, father-in-law, and other in-laws.

The responsibility she as is to ensure that the family tree thrives. She is instructed not to emulate male traits that might contaminate and demonize her. A profoundly religious traditional woman grows Kamala With all of their distinctive traits and natural talents, Markandaya challenges her female characters to be essentially outdated women. She is aware of the subtle barriers that are erected. opposed to women.

On the other hand, Markandaya presents Nalini, a typical Indian woman as obedient, loving, and caring to her husband and parents. Nalini and Ravi the

protagonist of the novel are young husband and wife. Though Ravi lives in his bride's home, never hesitates to dominate his bride Nalini. When Nalini talks about money that is lost, he threatens her. His anger grows high and starts slapping his wife sharply blow after blow on her face. She states:

He beats me.

He beats me, I don't know why. For nothing at all

But all the time: why does it go on all the time? Is it me? What I have done? What have I not done?

I try and try, I swear to you I try but it makes no difference. He's angry with me. All the time, I don't know why. I can't bear it any more.

(*AHFR* 64)

In *A Handful of Rice*, Nalini is masterfully portrayed. She can change a man's life because she is morally upright, lovely, and attractive with brilliant eyes and thick, shiny hair. Her speaking voice is always soft and low, which is a wonderful quality in a woman. At first glance, Ravi falls in love with her and longs for a secure marriage tie. Ravi adopts honest tailoring work and becomes aware of respectability thanks to Nalini's appeal. She is a physical representation of his illusion. She comforts him and makes him feel satisfied. Nalini experiences poverty, and shares some of uncomplaining traits, and even in the later stages of her pregnancy.

Nalini is suspected by her husband. When she buys a fan and begins to fan him he suspects her, "Who gave it to you- one of your admirers?" (*AHFR* 258). Due to the suspicion the relationship between husband and wife is ruined. He threatens

her, “you bitch” (*AHFR* 258). In trifle subject matter he beats and forces to chase her and says, “You Get out, Get out” (*AHFR* 259).

Although Ravi observes her struggling for breath and relieving herself by arching her back or massaging her abdomen against the cold granite stone, he has never heard her complain. Her attitude towards sea of troubles is stoic and unyielding. In actuality, she adopts all the customs and rituals practiced by her father Apu. Due to her conventional upbringing, she is modest and humble; she is content with her current situation and does not long for what is not. the ideal sister by giving her girls new outfits and helping her sister Thangam when she is in need. She challenges her husband, Ravi, increasing her voice, when he accuses Thangam of stealing Puttanna. She feels sympathy for her sister but holds Puttanna accountable for stealing Apu money. She is a good mother as well as a good sister.

She goes to great lengths to console her children, and she becomes disturbed when Ravi beats Raju close to the beach. She is stunned when her son passes away without prompt medical attention. She tends to Apu throughout his illness because she is a true daughter. She spends the night worrying about her father. She exudes integrity and has a childlike innocence about her. She performs admirably in her traditional roles as a decent mother, a loving sister, a submissive and devout wife, and a charming daughter.

After that event Nalini awakes herself and wants to resist the domination of her drunkard husband. She is silenced in her home. Her mouth was working, but she did not reply. But later she becomes aware and wants to challenge. To challenge the domination and to find out her ‘self’ or ‘identity’ she leaves her husband. She becomes radical one. The more submissive and traditional Nalini becomes challenging

and radical. But later when Ravi requests her to return home, she agrees to return with him. He turns to Nalini, “Come, she rose at once obediently” (*AHFR* 265). This shows Nalini’s ambivalent nature. Nalini leaves her own home to resist the domination of her husband but later agrees to come under the masculine hegemony by returning back. Again, Nalini confirms in the stereotypical feminine role. Markandaya neither gives Nalini a role of radical female nor of a traditional Indian female. Placing her in between position writer herself seems ambivalent.

Ravi feels lucky to have a wife like Nalini. He says, “Take a girl like that, and half a man’s troubles would be over” (*AHFR* 25). But later he does not believe Nalini and hurts her:

‘You go out,’ she said, crying, ‘at night, for hours. They say you meet this man. He’s vicious. Everyone knows he’s vicious.’ He was doing something to her,

‘Now it’s you too. I’ve tried not to believe it, but I can’t any more.

You’ve changed, he’s changed you.

I can’t go on, I can’t.

Get out Get out! (*AHFR* 259)

The patriarchal society expects women to wash, cook, clean, bear children and be confined within domestic affairs only. Women are undermined under the male domination so they are treated as an ‘object’ which has no identity of their own but on the contrary, men are considered as ‘subject’ the self having independent identity. So, policewoman wants to break patriarchal hegemony being a radical one. She seems

strict in her duty. She is gasping with anger. She says yes, that's just what we should have done, gone straight to the police; it's not worth taking pity on you and your like. She proves women are also powerful and courageous. They can face any sorts of complexities as policewoman resists the so-called feminine qualities asserting herself in masculine roles.

The woman of today is entirely different from the woman who considers pursuing equality. Having her individuality and highlighting her female rights when speaking with guys. In light of this, the new woman modified herself by the After changing her surroundings, she continues on her journey in search of her own identity with more depth and success, but never in the aberrant kind.

The women characters in Kamala Markandya novels stand out for some reason; it has to do with their unique emotional and spiritual makeup and how they react to other people and situations. Kamala Markandaya has depicted the new woman emotional, moral, and spiritual issues realistically. The lone sheet anchor in Ravi life in *A Handful of Rice* is Nalini. She is content with her current situation. She makes him abandon all romantic illusions after realizing the circumstances. She is undoubtedly traditional, but as she rescues her husband from the muck of an immoral society, a new woman appears in her. She draws him away from his erratic movements to herself, checks his outlandish fantasies, and over time develops into the voice of reason and realism.

Nalini has developed emotionally. She does have any of Ravi's silly cravings. She makes Ravi aware that she does not reside in a dream realm but rather in the actual world. *A Handful of Rice* is a novel by Kamala Markandaya that explores the

lives of Indian peasants during the time of British colonial rule. In the novel, women are portrayed as oppressed and marginalized members of society.

*A Handful of Rice* begins and ends with the hero's fight to get food. He tells Apu, the tailor, "I'm starving. I'm hungry. I want a meal" (*AHFR* 6) Apu's wife hits him with all her force for breaking in like a ruffian and blood drips from his face. he explains. Hunger forces him to leave his village. It is Nalini who brings a drastic change in his life. He falls in love at first sight. He longs for marriage that provides solace and mental peace to his agitating mind. He dreams of her and feels elated when he thinks of her." If I had a wife, he thought as he ate, she would cook for me, it would like this every day but what had he to offer to get himself a wife? – I'll buy her a little house, small but nice (*AHFR* 11)

Throughout the novel, women are shown to be treated as inferior to men and are subject to discrimination and abuse. "He beats me, I don't know why, But all the time: why does it go on, I try and try but that makes no difference. 'I can't bear it' anymore" (*AHFR* 264) They are expected to be subservient to their husbands and are often denied basic rights such as education and the ability to make decisions about their own lives. Women's labor is also undervalued and exploited, as they are expected to work long hours in the fields and the home without receiving fair compensation or recognition.

The protagonist of the novel, Rukmani, is a woman who must navigate the oppressive societal expectations and limitations placed upon her gender. She is a strong and resilient character who fights to protect her family and maintain her independence, despite the challenges she faces. Overall, *A Handful of Rice* highlights how women in rural India were marginalized and oppressed during the time of British

colonial rule. It emphasizes the importance of recognizing and challenging gender-based discrimination and the need for women's empowerment and equality

*The Handful of Rice* is a short story written by Kamala Markandaya, which depicts the life of a poor Indian farmer named Ravi, who struggles to make ends meet for his family. In the story, Nalini is Ravi's wife and the mother of their two children. Nalini is portrayed as a strong and resilient woman who works alongside her husband in the fields to provide for their family. She is also shown to be a caring mother who prioritizes the well-being of her children. Nalini has some traces of Apu's uncomplaining temperament, endures poverty, faces other difficulties and puts up with thrashing at the hand of her husband even in the advanced stage of her pregnancy. Ravi sees her fighting for breath, massaging "her abdomen or arching her back for relief against the cold granite stone, but he has never heard her complain" (AHFR 195)

Despite the hardships that she faces, Nalini maintains a positive attitude and a strong sense of determination to provide for her family. In the story, there is no explicit description of how other women perceive Nalini. However, it can be inferred that Nalini is respected and admired by those around her for her hard work, resilience, and devotion to her family. Additionally, the story portrays Nalini as a representation of the strength and resilience of Indian women who have to face many challenges in their daily lives. *The Handful of Rice* is a short story written by Kamala Markandaya, which portrays the life of a poor Indian couple named Rukmani and Nathan, who struggle to make ends meet in a rural village.

In the story, Nalini is a young and beautiful woman who lives in the same village as Rukmani and Nathan. While Nathan is drawn to Nalini's beauty, Rukmani

is distrustful of her and sees her as a threat to her marriage. Rukmani's suspicion of Nalini is because Nalini is unmarried and is known for having relationships with men in the village. As a woman, Rukmani is representative of the traditional values of Indian society, where fidelity and devotion to one's husband are highly valued. She views Nalini's behavior as immoral and disapproves of her actions. On the other hand, Nathan is more accepting of Nalini's behavior and sees her as a symbol of freedom and independence.

Overall, the portrayal of Nalini in *The Handful of Rice* is complex and multi-layered. While some women in the village may view her with suspicion and disapproval, others may see her as a symbol of female empowerment and freedom. The story highlights the different perspectives and attitudes toward women's behavior and morality in Indian society. Nalini, a young woman in Kamala Markandaya's *The Handful of Rice* faces several struggles throughout the story.

Firstly, Nalini is an unmarried woman in a society that values marriage and view women as incomplete without a husband. This makes her vulnerable to judgment and criticism from the other villagers, especially women like Rukmani, who hold traditional views about gender roles and morality. Secondly, Nalini's beauty and independence attract the attention of men in the village, leading to rumors and gossip about her character. She is seen as a loose woman who has relationships with multiple men, which further contributes to her marginalization in the community.

Thirdly, Nalini struggles with poverty and a lack of opportunities for personal and economic growth. She has to work hard to earn a living and support herself, often doing menial jobs that pay very little. This puts her at a disadvantage compared to men in the village, who have more opportunities and resources to improve their lives.

Lastly, Nalini also faces discrimination based on her gender, as women in the village are expected to conform to certain norms and expectations. She is seen as a threat to the patriarchal order of the village, which values male dominance and control over women.

Nalini's struggles in which highlight the intersectionality of gender, class, and social norms in shaping the experiences of women in rural India. Nalini is a significant character in Kamala Markandaya's *The Handful of Rice*. Here is a character sketch of Nalini based on her actions and characteristics in the story: Physical appearance: Nalini is described as a young and beautiful woman with long hair, dark eyes, and an attractive figure. She often wears colorful clothing, which contrasts with the drab attire of other village women.

Personality traits Nalini is a free-spirited and independent woman who refuses to conform to the traditional roles and expectations of women in her village. She is confident and assertive, which makes her stand out among other women in the village. Relationships Nalini is unmarried and has relationships with multiple men in the village, which makes her the subject of gossip and judgment from other villagers. She is seen as a threat to traditional gender roles and moral values.

Economic status Nalini is poor and has to work hard to earn a living. She does menial jobs like washing clothes and cleaning houses to make ends meet. Role in the story: Nalini's character serves as a foil to Rukmani's, highlighting the tension between traditional and modern values in rural Indian society. Her relationships with men and her independence challenge the patriarchal order of the village, which creates conflict and drama in the story. Overall, Nalini's character in *The Handful of Rice* is complex and multi-layered, representing the struggles and aspirations of

women in rural India who seek to break free from traditional gender roles and social norms

In *Nectar in a Sieve* Kamala Markandaya portrays the central female character, Rukmani, as a resilient and determined woman who faces numerous challenges in her life, including poverty, famine, and the loss of her children. Through Rukmani's experiences, Markandaya offers a powerful commentary on how traditional gender roles and expectations can limit women's opportunities and agency. Throughout the novel, Rukmani's experiences highlight how women are often marginalized and disempowered in patriarchal societies. For example, Rukmani is forced to accept an arranged marriage at a young age, and her husband often makes decisions for her without her input or consent.

Kamala Markandaya's significant theme of poverty and Hunger in her selected novels *Nectar in a sieve* and *A Handful of Rice*. For hunger is a curious thing: at First it is With you all the time, Walking and sleeping and in your dreams and your belly cries out Insistently and there is a gnawing and a pain As of your very vitals were being devoured. Despite these challenges, however, Rukmani is also depicted as a strong and capable woman who can assert her agency and make her own decisions when necessary.

Additionally, Markandaya uses Rukmani's experiences to highlight how women's contributions to society are often overlooked or undervalued. For example, Rukmani is responsible for much of the agricultural work that sustains her family, yet her contributions are often overshadowed by the work of her husband and sons. Through Rukmani's struggles to assert her value and contributions

Markandaya critiques how traditional gender roles can limit women's opportunities and prevent them from achieving their full potential. Overall, Markandaya's portrayal of Rukmani and her experiences in the novel offers a powerful commentary on how traditional gender roles and expectations can both empower and limit women in their pursuit of independence and self-determination. By highlighting the complexities of women's experiences in patriarchal societies, the novel sheds light on the ongoing struggle for gender equality and the need for greater recognition of women's agency and contributions.

In *Nectar in a Sieve* Kamala Markandaya portrays the central female character, Rukmani, as a strong and resilient woman who faces numerous challenges in her life, including poverty, famine, and the loss of her children. Through Rukmani's experiences, Markandaya offers a powerful commentary on how traditional gender roles and expectations can limit women's opportunities and agency, while also celebrating their resilience and strength in the face of adversity. One of the key themes explored in the novel is the concept of motherhood and the expectations placed on women to bear and raise children. Rukmani is initially viewed by her husband and others in her community solely as a means of producing sons, and her fertility is seen as a measure of her worth as a woman. However, as the novel progresses, Rukmani's experiences challenge this traditional view of motherhood and highlight the complex emotions and experiences that women face in their roles as mothers.

Through Rukmani's relationships with her children, Markandaya explores how motherhood can both empower and constrain women. Rukmani is deeply devoted to her children and willing to make sacrifices for their well-being, but at the same time, her role as a mother limits her opportunities and agency, particularly when it comes

to pursuing her interests and desires. Overall, Markandaya's portrayal of Rukmani and her experiences in *Nectar in a Sieve* offers a nuanced and complex view of how traditional gender roles and expectations can shape women's lives.

While the novel acknowledges the challenges and limitations that women face in patriarchal societies, it also celebrates their resilience, strength, and capacity for love and compassion. Rukmani faces numerous struggles throughout her life, many of which are related to poverty, social inequality, and traditional gender roles. Some of the key struggles that Rukmani faces in the novel include Poverty: Rukmani is born into a poor family and is forced to work hard from a young age to help support her family.

As an adult, she and her husband struggle to make ends meet, particularly during times of drought and famine. Limited educational opportunities Rukmani is unable to attend school, as her family cannot afford to pay for her education. This limits her opportunities for personal and intellectual growth. Social inequality: Rukmani and her family are members of a lower caste and are therefore subject to discrimination and marginalization by members of higher castes. This limits their opportunities and reinforces their poverty.

Gender roles and expectations As a woman, Rukmani is expected to fulfill traditional gender roles, including being a dutiful wife and mother. She is also subject to patriarchal attitudes and restrictions that limit her agency and independence. Loss of children: Rukmani suffers the loss of several of her children due to illness, poverty, and other factors. These losses are a source of immense grief and pain for her, and they also compound the struggles that she faces in her daily life.

Despite these struggles, however, Rukmani remains resilient and determined, and she finds ways to cope with the challenges that she faces. Through her experiences, Kamala Markandaya offers a powerful commentary on how poverty, inequality, and traditional gender roles can limit people's opportunities and agency, while also celebrating the human capacity for resilience, hope, and compassion in the face of adversity. Rukmani is the central character of Kamala Markandaya's novel *Nectar in a Sieve*.

She is a resilient strong, and compassionate woman who faces numerous challenges in her life, including poverty, famine, and the loss of her children. Here is a character sketch of Rukmani: Resilience: Rukmani is a highly resilient character who can cope with the many challenges and setbacks that she faces throughout the novel. Despite the poverty and hardship that she experiences, she remains determined to survive and provide for her family. Compassion Rukmani is a deeply compassionate person who cares deeply for her family and others in her community. She is always willing to help others, even when it means sacrificing her own needs and desires. Strong-willed Rukmani is a strong-willed character who is willing to fight for what she believes in.

She is not afraid to challenge authority or tradition when she feels that it is necessary, and she is willing to take risks to improve her life and the lives of those around her. Motherhood: Motherhood is a central theme of the novel, and Rukmani is depicted as a devoted and loving mother who is willing to make sacrifices for her children. She is deeply affected by the loss of her children, and these losses shape her character and experiences throughout the novel.

Rukmani's endurance is a defining characteristic of her character. She can endure the many hardships and challenges that she faces, and she never gives up hope, even in the darkest of times. Overall, Rukmani is a complex and multifaceted character who embodies the resilience, compassion, and strength of women in the face of adversity. Through her experiences, Kamala Markandaya offers a powerful commentary on how poverty, inequality, and traditional gender roles can shape people's lives, while also celebrating the human capacity for endurance, love, and hope. *A Handful of Rice* reflect the challenges of women in rural Indian society in the middle of the 20th century.

It is challenging for women to assert themselves because of the diverse cultural, societal, and economic elements that define these fights. their expectations and uphold their rights. Rukmani, the lead character in *Nectar in a Sieve* encounters many difficulties during her life. She is forced to move to her husband villages after being married off at a young age and finds it difficult to adapt to the new culture and its traditions. She is a victim of the repressive social conventions that demand that women submit to their husbands and have children.

Financial troubles and her husband infidelity and financial difficulties also add to her problems, and she has to work tirelessly to make ends meet. Similar to this, the protagonist *A Handful of Rice* Gnanamma, is limited by the social and economic circumstances present in rural India. Young widow Gnanamma is compelled to work odd jobs to support herself and her child. She, however, encounters prejudice and exploitation at the hands of her employers, who expose her to severe working conditions and provide her with meager earnings.

She also has to deal with the social stigma of being a widow, which makes it challenging for her to get married again or obtain a reliable source of income. Both books highlight the patriarchal values and gender-based prejudice that was common in rural India in the middle of the 20th century. They show how women were subjected to various types of exploitation and oppression and had to endure hard to achieve their aspirations, despite these challenges, however, Rukmani and Gnanamma demonstrate remarkable resilience to achievements and fortitude in their struggles, inspiring readers to reflect on the need for gender equality and social justice.

Nalini, the younger sister of the main character Thangam, encounters various difficulties with her husband Ravi and his family in *The Handful of Rice* by Kamala Markandaya. At the start of the book, Nalini is wed off to Ravi, who comes from a more prosperous family than Thangam. Nalini learns that Ravi is a compulsive gambler who frequently loses all of their money in gaming, though, not long after the couple is married. Nalini is compelled to labor to provide for the family, doing odd tasks like selling products in the market and embroidering.

When Ravi fails at gambling, she must also take the brunt of his rage and frustration, which frequently escalates to physical abuse. Additionally, Nalini is under constant pressure from Ravi family to provide more dowry and cash. They demand more since they are unhappy with the amount her family gave during the wedding. This puts a lot of pressure on Nalini, who struggles to live up to their standards despite her best efforts. Nalini tries to speak up for her rights and opposes her husband and in-laws throughout the entire book.

However, because the family sees her as an outsider who does not understand their ways, she frequently encounters resistance and criticism. She is also bound by

the patriarchal social standards, which state that wives must submit to and obey their husbands and in-laws. Despite these obstacles, Nalini is shown to be a strong and persistent girl who never gives up. Even though Ravi and his family treat her badly and abuse her, she keeps working hard and providing for her family.

Her challenges serve as a reminder of gender-based discrimination. The mid-twentieth century patriarchal practices that prevailed in Indian culture highlighted the need for social justice and gender equality. Nalini, the sister-in-law of the main character Gnanamma by Kamala Markandaya, contends with her brother Ravi and his family in a significant way. Nalini's husband deserts her, leaving her to care for her children alone. She is compelled to rely on her brother Ravi and Shakuntala, his wife, for financial assistance. However, Nalini is treated cruelly and with contempt by Ravi and Shakuntala, who shows no sympathy for her situation.

They frequently even though she has done anything to deserve it, degrade her and hold her responsible for her problems. As a woman in a patriarchal society, Nalini faces additional challenges and has few options for resolving her predicament. Due to her lack of training and experience, as well as the traditional expectations that women should be obedient, she is unable to get employment. Because she is a woman in a patriarchal society with few options for changing her circumstances, Nalini's struggle is made even more difficult. She is restricted by traditional conventions that state women should be obedient to their males, which prevents her from finding employment owing to her lack of education and abilities. relations with men. Since she is unable to escape her situation, she feels trapped and helpless.

The difficulties experienced by women in traditional Indian society where they are frequently financially dependent on male relatives and are frequently the

targets of abuse are highlighted by Nalini circumstance. Her struggles also serve as a reminder of the importance of greater gender equality and empowerment so that women like Nalini can live a life with greater freedom and choice.

Rukmani, the main character of Kamala Markanday *Nectar in a Sieve*; endures several hardships during her life. It is challenging for women to exercise their rights and realize their goals because of several social, cultural, and economic issues. Due to their frequent reliance on male relatives for financial support and their frequent exposure to violence and mistreatment, women in traditional Indian society confront several challenges that are highlighted circumstance.

Her struggles serve as a reminder of the necessity for greater gender equality and female empowerment so that Nalini and other women like her have more choices. Rukmani, the main character *Nectar in a Sieve* by Kamala Markandaya, encounters several challenges during her life. She faces many social, cultural, and economic challenges that make it challenging for her to stand up for her rights and realize her goals. Rukmani lack agency and control over her own life is one of her main struggles.

She is forced to move to her husband villages after being married off at a young age and finds it difficult to adapt to the new culture and its traditions. She is constrained in her independence and autonomy by restrictive social conventions that state that women should be obedient to their husbands and have children. Rukmani lack agency and control over her own life is one of her main struggles. She is forced to move to her husband villages after being married off at a young age and finds it difficult to adapt to the new culture and its traditions.

Victim of repressive social expectations that require women to She has less independence and autonomy because women are expected to be obedient to their spouses and have children. Rukmani also has to deal with her husband adultery and her financial problems. She experiences extreme anguish and emotional struggle when her husband, Nathan, marries a second woman. Rukmani is tired since she has to work nonstop to make ends meet because Nathan is unable to produce a consistent wage.

She has less independence and autonomy because women are expected to be obedient to their spouses and have children. Rukmani also has to deal with her husband adultery and her financial problems. She experiences extreme anguish and emotional struggle when her husband, Nathan, marries a second woman. Rukmani is tired since she has to work nonstop to make ends meet because Nathan is unable to produce a consistent wage.

Rukmani also experiences a variety of motherhood-related difficulties. She suffers enormous sadness and heartache as a result of the loss of several children due to illness and poverty. Her difficulties as a mother are exacerbated by the fact that she has little access to resources and healthcare, making it challenging for her to care for herself. requirements of kids. Rukmani challenges serve as a constant reminder of the patriarchal customs and gender based prejudice that was common in rural India around the middle of the 20th century. They show how women experienced various sorts of exploitation and discrimination and how they struggled twice as hard to realize their goals.

Despite these difficulties, Rukmani exhibits extraordinary bravery and endurance in her efforts, encouraging readers to consider the necessity of social

justice and gender equality. Rukmani has issues with her kids, especially Selvam, who is her son. As a result of Selvam involvement with a rebel organization that opposes the British colonial administration, he is in danger, which fills Rukmani with fear and concern. She worries about his security and struggles with her desire to shield him. Her sense of obligation to him and his political convictions.

The bond between Rukmani and her daughter Ira is a huge source of struggle for her. Rukmani feels terrible sorrow and disgrace when Ira gets pregnant out of wedlock. Rukmani must deal with the social stigma attached to unwed pregnancies and battle to balance her love for her daughter with her obligation to uphold societal conventions. Along with this, Selvam, Rukmani son, has a difficult relationship with her.

Rukmani is terrified and anxious because Selvam puts himself at risk by joining a revolutionary party that opposes the British colonial administration. She is conflicted between her desire to protect him and her concerns for his well-being. His political convictions are supported by both his and her sense of obligation. Rukmani connection with her daughter Ira presents another important challenge. Rukmani is extremely embarrassed and ashamed after Ira becomes pregnant out of wedlock.

The social stigma attached to premarital pregnancies is something that Rukmani must deal with, as she battles to Due to extraordinary talent In many ways, Kamala Markandaya position in Indo-Anglian literature is unique. She has nine novels to her name so far. She is the best female novelist of the Post-Independence era and an extraordinary realism. Her social awareness and great interest in Indian society She achieves international fame thanks to her comments mixed with critical acumen and her feminine but dynamic sensibility. She is the most renowned author active in

modern literature, and William Walsh has referred to her as "the most gifted" of women authors.

Numerous articles have been written about Kamala Markandaya writings, highlighting their many different facets. balance her love for her daughter with her sense of obligation to follow social conventions. Nevertheless, it cannot be stated that she has gotten the kind of attention she merits. Therefore, this essay focuses on the female characters in *A Handful of Rice* to examine how they behave in various contexts to demonstrate that they are significantly more advanced than their counterparts.

Examine whether they may come together as a fresh creative force for the traditional and contemporary images of women. In the novel, *A Handful of Rice* from 1966, Nalini succeeds in changing her spouse. The novel's main theme is poverty and hunger. As opposed to *Nectar in a Sieve*, this story takes place in an urban setting. The novelist terrifyingly depicts economic issues. Both *Nectar in a Sieve* novel and *A Handful of Rice* both address the issue of societal inequality, but in this instance, the issue of existence is of the utmost significance.

The issue of moral ethics coexists with the issue of economic insecurity. By demonstrating that a woman is not in any way inferior to a man, Kamala Markandaya highlights the strengths and possibilities of women through her female heroines. Her female leads have given innumerable women a cause to fight for and a glimmer of hope. spirit into them for the benefit of mankind and the easing of misery among people. A furious, hungry person breaks the law, engages in criminal activity, and lowers himself by interacting with the outside world in questionable ways.

This also applies to Ravi in *A Handful of Rice*, who stands in for those who are overcome by the demon. Ravi, unable to control his hunger, forcibly enters Jayamma's home, who queries him about what he has done. The hero's struggle to obtain nourishment is the main conflict in *A Handful of Rice*. He says to the tailor Apu, "starving, famished. I desire food."

When Apu's wife strikes him for breaking in like a thief, blood pours from his face. He says, "I was starving. He must leave his home due to hunger." He experiences a significant transformation in his life because of Nalini. At first glance, he is smitten. He longs for a marriage that will calm his racing thoughts and provide him comfort. He fantasizes about her and is happy to think of her. As he ate, he considered how his wife would prepare meals for him if he had one. However, he purchases her a modest yet lovely home.

He succeeds in getting married to her, but fate brings demons like hunger and poverty to crush his plans. Raju, his beloved son, dies from starvation and poverty, and inside of him, he beats innocent Nalini. In *A Handful of Rice*, Kamala Markandaya demonstrates how hunger and poverty have a psychological impact on interpersonal relationships. Ravi arrives in the city full of hope but leaves dissatisfied. He succumbs to the criminal activity of becoming haughty and arrogant and elevating himself to the status of upper-class people. Ravi is seduced by the urban modernity that fascinates him. Nobody can deny the socioeconomic aspect's importance to existence. In this novel, she explores the psychological effects of hunger and poverty on interpersonal interactions.

Ravi enters the city full of optimism but departs disappointed. He gives in to the criminal offense of developing a haughty, arrogant demeanor and lifting

yourself to the rank of the aristocracy The metropolitan modernity that delights Ravi draws him in. He succumbs to several vices and is captured by King Damodar of the underworld and his minions. In her works, Kamala Markandaya explores the complete spectrum of feminine experiences.

Her feminine characters are more powerful and eloquent than the male portion. Her ability to paint pictures of women using many colors, including socio-religious and socio-ecological colors, is impressive. Her male characters have been transformed into planets that get light from the stars that shine brightly with their light, while she has transformed them into bright stars using the alchemy of her heart. With a few notable exceptions.

The Indian system is characterized by a male-dominated culture that values male superiority over female equality. Man holds the starring position, while the woman must be content with a supporting one and remains in the background. She expected to transform herself into the shape of the family she was married into, fusing her personality with her husband She transforms into her husband shadow and stays at his side throughout life. She is expected to stand by him in any condition, bolstering his strength with hers. She calls her husband with reverence in their bedroom since she loves him and considers him to be an idol. She also worships him and gives him flowers.

To confirm the same husband from generation to generation, she observes a lot of fasts. To avoid the hardships of widowhood, she also longs for her husband. The Her mother instills in her manners, decorum, order, and aroma in the kitchen This is what she sees as her potential future. This is the mentality a female develops in childhood. She is trained to be submissive, devoted, and forgiving to establish herself

as the ideal wife, not only for her partner but also for her mother-in-law, father-in-law, and other in-laws.

She is accountable for ensuring that the family tree continues to flourish. She is instructed not to emulate male traits that might contaminate and demonize her. A traditional woman who practices her religion fervently develops a stoicism that grants her mental strength and shields her from stress and conflict. The female characters that Kamala Markandaya creates are outdated women with all of their distinctive features and intrinsic abilities. She is conscious of the subtle barriers placed in the way of women.

Nalini is masterfully portrayed. She can completely change a man's life since she is a virtue, decency, and attractive with brilliant eyes and thick, glossy hair. Her speaking voice is always low and gentle, which is a wonderful quality in a woman. Upon first seeing her, Ravi falls in love with her and aspires to have a secure marriage. Ravi adopts honest tailoring work and becomes aware of respectability thanks to Nalini's allure. She is a physical representation of his illusion. She comforts him and makes him feel satisfied. Nalini puts up with poverty, struggles with other issues, and tolerates beatings from her husband even at the advanced stage of her pregnancy. She shares some of Apu's uncomplaining disposition.

Although Ravi observes her struggling for air and relieving herself by arching her back or stroking her abdomen against the cold granite stone, he has never heard her complain. Hers is a grim, unyielding perspective on the sea. In actuality, she adopts all the customs and rituals practiced by her father Apu. Due to her conventional upbringing, she is modest and humble; she is content with her current

situation and does not long for what is not the role of a kind sister by giving her sister Thangam assistance when she is in need and providing new outfits for her girls.

She challenges her husband, Ravi, increasing her voice, when he accuses Thangam of stealing Puttanna. Despite having sympathy for her sister, she holds Puttanna accountable for stealing Apu money. She is a good mother as well as a good sister. She goes to great lengths to console her children, and she becomes disturbed when Ravi beats Raju close to the beach. She is stunned when her son passes away without prompt medical attention.

As a true daughter, she takes care of those who were unwell. She spends the night worrying about her father. She has a childlike innocence and is righteous and virtuous. She performs admirably in her traditional roles as a decent mother, a loving sister, a submissive and devout wife, and a charming daughter. Thangam, Nalini's sister, betrays not only her father but also truth and honesty, in stark contrast to Nalini, the epitome of virtue.

She is a quirky old-fashioned copy of a woman with just a hint of sensible sex. She is a cruel, insensitive, and unstoppable lady. The mother of both virtuous daughters like Nalini and mean daughters like Thangam, and Jayamma, is portrayed as being cruel, egotistical, and mean. She binds Ravi and beats him severely, but when she notices that he is hungry, she gives him food.

Despite not appearing to be sympathetic, she is. She is a sensible individual, possessed of practical common sense. She takes advantage of Ravi once she realizes how much he loves her daughter Nalini. She adopts his source of income and wants to free herself from the responsibility of her daughter's marriage. She practically runs the home and celebrates the marriage with finesse. She has a positive quality, with an

acute feeling A new woman, who asserts her own identity and emphasizes her rights as a woman, is entirely different from the woman who considers wanting equality with males.

As a result, the new woman moves forward while holding fast to her core beliefs and adapting to changing circumstances. on the path to discovering a deeper version of her own identity and gaining acceptance, but never acting abnormally. The women characters in Kamala Markandya novels stand out for some reason; it has to do with their unique emotional and spiritual makeup and how they react to other people and situations.

Kamala Markandaya has depicted the new emotional, moral, and spiritual issues realistically. *In A Handful of Rice*, Nalini serves as sole support system. She is content with her current situation. She makes him abandon all romantic illusions after realizing the circumstances She may be traditional, but when she removes her husband from the situation, a new woman appears in her. the moral muck of the world. She draws him away from his erratic movements to herself, checks his outlandish fantasies, and over time develops into the voice of reason and realism. Nalini has developed emotionally. She makes Ravi aware that she does not reside in a dream world but rather in the real world. In *Nectar in a Sieve* Rukmani who seems to be the legendary archetype of an Markandaya proves that the plight of the woman in rural India has a meaningful role in the changing scenario of Indian society.

She is the first Indian writer who probes into the women's psyche. A woman occupies a conspicuous role in her novels. She portrays the woman who struggles against those forces which are beyond her control Rukmini in *Nectar in a Sieve*. But it does not mean they rebel. In the novel Nalini is shown as an ideal sufferer and

nurturer. The tolerance of these women is born out of their faith. Their strength lies essentially in their innate capacity for sacrifice.

Love and compassion are inherent qualities in them and are not blunted by the passage of time or social oppression. Even in novel *A Handful of Rice*, where male characters are the protagonists, the women are shown calm and soothing as if to counterbalance the ambitious nature of male characters. She shows her awareness of the female consciousness through her characterization. Ideal housewife rises against the social forces confronting her retaining the sanctity of her home.

In her assertions against the social forces, she emerges as a positive mature leader. Nalini becomes sheet anchor of the wavering life of Ravi at the time when he, with his own masculine values, undermines the family life. Ravi feels the restoring power of Nalini in his weak moments of International Journal of Innovations allurements towards Damodar's amoral world. He feels incomplete without Nalini. He cannot move a step without her guidance.

He feels peace, easy and safe under her eye and care. While living according to the traditional norms, she guides her husband and instills courage in him in the critical hours of his life. She, thus, has all the qualities of an awakened woman and makes efforts to attain recognition by means of her dedication to her husband. In *Some Inner Fury* Kamala Markandaya introduces Premala as the representative of her feminist view of life. She is brought up in the conventional Hindu tradition and is married to the westernized Kit. What she searches in life is quite different from what he wants her to be.

Though basically, Kamala Markandaya has projected the traditional image of woman, it will be injustice to carve her woman in this image as she has re-discovered,

redefined and asserted her identity and recognition as person, not as possession. Feeling the pulse of the changed time, she has created a new race of woman who is neither staunch traditionalist nor ultra-modern but that who honors the traditions and welcomes modernity to the best of her caliber and sensibility. She can very intelligently keep pace with the new developments of the fast electronic world. To create such new race, she has taken up the most vitalizing stuff of tradition along with the purest light stuff of modernity.

This light stuff of modernity has now entered her soul electrifying the moral strength, which expresses itself at the surface in the form of her equipoise. By creating the new image of woman, Kamala Markandaya has emerged as a bridge builder between the tradition and modernity .Her heroines are awakened whether they are modern or traditional. Kamala Markandaya has proved that Indian women are made to adopt two contradictory roles-the nurturing care taking and the passive helpless role. She is expected to shift herself between these two roles. The women with strong roots are successful while others are not. Reading these novels a student would understand the innate capacity of Indian women and also would know the illness of aping foreign culture. The study shows us that the Indian woman - passive or aggressive, traditional or modern –Markandaya proves that the plight of the woman in rural India serves to reflect the writer’s sense of isolation, fear, bewilderment and emotional vulnerability. Often she is also made use of as the agent for the author’s quest for psychological insight.

Most women in fiction and in real life have to grapple with conflict situations. How far to confirm, how to break away to assert one’s individuality, how to overcome the sense of loss in rebellion, how to solve. The quest for feminine autonomy still remains vital for women as an ideal to be achieved and the theme of autonomy,

selfhood and self-realization still forms an integral part of contemporary feminist writing. The identity crisis- these questions need to be answered. and awareness. Indian literature has been documenting the stories of the Indian women from the classical era up until now.

The male authors have naturally dominated the field of literature with their normally stereotyped perceptions of women in their works. It must be said that there has been little truth regarding the lives of women in these male authors 'works. The emergence of female authors in India has been successful in depicting new perspectives in the images of women in their writings. Male authors like the Noble Prizewinner Rabindranath Tagore, Salman Rushdie, R.K. Narayan, Vikram Seth, Amitav Ghosh, Khushwant Singh, Shashi Tharoor, Amit Chaudhary and Arvind Adiga have carved their names in the international art and have gained a special place in the world literature.

The second generation of Indian English women novelists has favorably responded to the changed psychological realities of Indian life especially after Independence. To this group belong writers like Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Ruth Pravar Jhabvala, Nargis Dalal, Shobha De and Bharti Mukherjee, all being well equipped both emotionally and intellectually to treat the situation appropriately.

These women novelists have awareness which comes because of their wide acquaintance with the nuances of the life in East as well as the West. Their high educational and intellectual standards have sharpened their observations of life and have imparted a psychological depth to their writings. These women novelists have

been able to create interesting personages who successfully oppose the oppression inflicted on women in society.

Markandaya's women are in search of something positive. She has portrayed a gloomy scenario of Indian life due to changes in social, economic and political spheres yet she believes that togetherness and mutual understanding can create a meaningful existence for mankind. In each of her novels she has portrayed strong women characters who are prepared to meet the challenges of life come what may. The novels of Kamala Markandaya reflect feminine sensibility in contemporary India. In her novels, she traces a woman's journey from self-sacrifice to self-realization, from self-denial to self-assertion and from self-negation to self-affirmation. Markandaya proves that the plight of the woman in rural India has a meaningful role in the changing scenario of Indian society. She is the first Indian writer who probes into the women's psyche.

A woman occupies a conspicuous role in her novels. She portrays the woman who struggles against those forces which are beyond her control as Rukmini in *Nectar in a Sieve*. But it does not mean they rebel. In *A Handful of Rice*, Nalini is shown as an ideal sufferer and nurturer. The tolerance of these women is born out of their faith. Their strength lies essentially in their innate capacity for sacrifice. Love and compassion are inherent qualities in them and are not blunted by the passage of time or social oppression.

Even in novels like *A Handful of Rice*, where male characters are the protagonists, the women are shown calm and soothing as if to counterbalance the ambitious nature of male characters. She shows her awareness of the female consciousness through her characterization. Kamala Markandaya has presented Indian

food in western plate. While doing so some times she has crossed the limits and forgets the ethos of Indian culture in order to please the western readers for whom she was writing.

Like Shakespeare who introduced the supernatural elements, she paints the pages of her novels with red color sex, naked pictures, virginity, first night after marriage etc. She presented the great tradition of women novelists established by Jane Austen. She has broken the monopoly permanent place in Indian fiction. Kamala Markandaya's novel *A Handful of Rice* is primarily a study of the basic fact of awakening of feminine consciousness. Her female protagonist Nalini has shown that she is not inferior to her male counterpart in any way and makes the male oriented society realize of their integral position

Though, Kamala Markandaya has projected the traditional image of woman, it will be injustice to carve her woman in this image as she has rediscovered, redefined and asserted her identity as person, not as possession and welcomes modernity to the best of her caliber and sensibility. She very intelligently keeps pace with the new developments of the world. The light stuff of modernity enters her soul electrifying the moral strength, which expresses itself at the surface in the form of her equipoise.

## Conclusion

It is clear that the people have faced a lot of struggles during the post independence and that struggles is for *A Handful of Rice* and still in today`s world the struggle continues and thus those aspects are very clearly signified in both the kamala markandaya`s novels *A Handful of Rice* and *Nectar in the sieve* In both the novel it is clear that the people have undergone many problems such as poverty, hunger, starvation, beggary, prostitution, crime, unemployment and the unemployment problem is considered to be one of the major problem in the society.

The role of unemployment which plays a significant role in both the novel And life is very precious for everyone life needs proper care and nurture .Human life depends on society only in a good society we can find a good life life is simple ,vert little is needed to make it happy but social evils insist on making it complicated.

Social Evils in a society have become a serious concern in the present day world it is gradually affecting roots of our culture and its blocking its rapid growth on the global chart the main idea of this research paper is to highlight social evils in rural and urban societies. it is all the sufferings in the depicted in the novel sufferings of the rural and the urban people The both the novels by Kamala Markandaya offer stirring depictions of the difficulties people in post-independence India experienced as individuals and as groups.

Despite the fact that each novel offers a different scenario, they also tackle issues of poverty, social injustice, and the difficulties of adjusting to rapid society is changing. The main character in *A Handful of Rice* Ravi, stands in for the underprivileged and marginalised segment of society. The book highlights the battle

for basic needs while illustrating the stark reality of urban poverty in India. basics including clothing, housing, and job.

The struggles that many people have as they negotiate the complexities of urban life and struggle with the vast economic divides in society are reflected in journey. Independence, the problems of poverty and injustice still exist. Similar to this, *Nectar in a Sieve* explores the difficulties rural communities experience as they deal with modernization effects and shifting agricultural methods. The main character, Rukmani, and her family are farmers and members of a lower caste.

The book investigates the effects of the effects of traditional agricultural methods and the rural way of life under industrialization, urbanisation, and the Green Revolution. Rukmani family faces a number of challenges as they try to adjust to the quickly changing world, including poverty, loss, and displacement. The book comes to a bittersweet conclusion with Rukmani finding comfort in her unwavering spirit and fortitude, yet also addressing the ongoing difficulties her community has endured.

Kamala Markandaya depicts the post-independence problems as a continuing process rather than a neatly ended scenario in both of her works. She highlights the tenacity and resolve of those affected by poverty, social inequity, and quick societal changes while she offers a comprehensive view of their intricacies. individuals while still recognising the structural limitations they encounter.

Through her writings, Markandaya challenges readers to consider the long-lasting effects of colonialism, class distinctions, and modernization on Indian society while highlighting the necessity of ongoing attempts to solve these concerns. They centre on the dictum that art must have a social purpose and she depicts the life of a man or a woman in relation to society and to destiny. As a novelist, she is sharply

conscious of the contemporary socio-economic realities, as they affect the lives of millions of Indians and add to their misery and indignity. She focuses on the family structure to establish her themes in different novels. She is different from her contemporaries in that she depicts vividly and with a rare understanding the realities of Indian life.

Women are portrayed in diverse ways in Kamala Markandaya books reflecting the social and cultural situations in which the protagonists live. While both works examine the difficulties and tribulations encountered by women, they offer different insights into Nalini, the main character of *A Handful of Rice* stands in for all the oppressed and marginalised women in Indian culture. She is portrayed as a strong, resilient character who struggles with patriarchal traditions that limit her independence as well as poverty.

Kamala Markandaya points out how the heavy rain drought affect the general life of farmers. She also throws light on pathetic condition of the tenant farmers. Common problems like the problem of unemployment and the problem of fallen women have been portrayed by her Markandaya emphasises the issues through Nalini`s experiences. unpleasant realities that women, especially those who are poor, must endure.

According to the book, women are frequently caught in a cycle of poverty and helplessness and are therefore prone to exploitation, prejudice, and abuse. perceptions of women in their respective societies. The lesson learned from *A Handful of Rice* is that social inequality and structural oppression have a significant impact on how women perceive themselves. Despite their resiliency, women still face significant obstacles and little chances because of strongly ingrained gender stereotypes.

Social structures and roles. However *Nectar in a Sieve* offers a more complex viewpoint on women perception. The story centres on Rukmani, a villager in rural India, and her battles with industry, urbanisation, and poverty. Rukmani plays the roles of a wife and mother in the conventional sense, although she demonstrates power, flexibility, and resourcefulness as well. Rukmani and other female characters are portrayed by Markandaya as having a strong feeling of belonging, camaraderie, and fortitude.

Despite their struggles, they find comfort and strength in their friendships with other women. The song *Nectar in a Sieve* reveals that women perceptions can be influenced by their capacity to find support and strength in their relationships and communities as well as societal restraints. The novels *A Handful of Rice* and *Nectar in a Sieve* by Kamala Markandaya offer two distinct viewpoints on how women are perceived.

Women lives are shaped by structural oppression and societal inequality, which *A Handful of Rice* emphasises and highlights the difficulties women experience in escaping. Patriarchal traditions of Poverty. In contrast *Nectar in a Sieve* examines the fortitude and toughness of women in the face of hardship, demonstrating how their view may be influenced by their interpersonal connections and the help of their community. Both books provide insight into the nuanced and varied perspectives of women, providing information about the various ways that women see and interact with the social and cultural environments.

*A Handful of Rice* by Kamala Markandaya is largely a study of the fundamental truth of the awakening of feminine consciousness. Her female lead, Nalini, has demonstrated that she is in no way inferior to her male counterpart and has

helped the male-oriented culture see their important role. but it would be unfair to depict her in this way because she has redefined and proclaimed her identity as a person rather than a property, and she accepts modernity to the best of her ability and sensibility She is extremely intelligent and keeps up with global changes.

Her moral fortitude is electrified by the lightness of modernity as it seeps into her spirit, manifesting itself on the outside as her poise. Kamala Markandaya has created a new carbon replica of a woman by. She was created to serve as a bridge between tradition and modernity. In this way Kamala Markandaya portrays a realistic picture of the rural Indian and its problems through this novel. Since *Nectar in a Sieve* portrays rural India with pitiless realism and shows the winds of change blow across it with new social forces.

The problems described in the novel have a typical rural tinge. Whether it is on economic, social religious or human level, the novel belongs to Indian rural life in all its manifestations. After analyzing the novel it is easy to say that Kamala Markandaya has successfully recorded all aspects of post colonial Indian rural society. She exposes all possible aspects whether it is the weak structure of society, domestic violence towards women especially to widows, impact of modernity and its conflict with that of urban high style and bright mannered society, with its culture, traditionalism and its negative-positive effects on human-beings.

In this sense she is a true humanist; whose novels are a realistic picture of traditional society. She has enjoyed the glittering world of the West which has enriched her stock of themes, yet the rural India forms the basis of her creative urge and rural India finds an unforgettable room in her vision. *Nectar in a Sieve* a great work of art is that it is result not of personal suffering of the author but of the minute

observation of acute suffering. In its particular theme of the tragic plight of Rukmani and her family, there is universality of love, loyalty and suffering that will appeal to readers all over the world. Nathan and Rukmani are the representatives of thousands of uprooted peasants under the pressure of industrial economy and the vagaries of nature.

Rukmani's village is indeed symbolic of the entire rural India. *Nectar in a Sieve* shows that in the traditional Hindu society a woman's position as a daughter-in-law, wife and mother and later grandmother is pre-planned for her, and she has only to live within the given framework to carve out a respectable position for herself. As a wife Rukmani, a plain looking woman, is obviously satisfied with her marital life with Nathan. She bears and rears their children, cooks for them and sees to it that things at home are as perfect as they can be. As a partner she partakes of all his sufferings and his out-of-door hardships. For herself she wants nothing.

The Indian philosophy of self-negation and passive acceptance of fate is in her blood. She needs no book to learn it. Women find their utmost fulfillment in motherhood and that is her greatest achievement too. The embodiment of such a mother figure is found in Rukmani. The single force that unites the whole structure of the novel is the character of the narrator, Rukmani. She is not simply a village girl, a loving and devoted wife and a sacrificing mother of Indian society.

She has transcended these limited physical identities to represent the universal mother figure. Markandaya has not confined Rukmani to any particular class, creed, or convention. She is conceived as the encompassing, enduring, devoted, sacrificing, suffering, loving and forgiving mother figure.

In the end, we can say that Kamala Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve* deals with the life of poverty, hunger and starvations, lived by the poor tenant-farmers in countless Indian villages. Markandaya's literature is the literature of disapproval of existing injustice, social inequalities, exploitation, cruelty, irrational attitudes, disintegration of the individual, erosion of social value, cross culture of capitalism, colonial imperialism and so on. The novel is perhaps the first Indian novel in English which sincere attempt has been made to project a realistic picture of rural India in all its shade and details – famine, drought, excessive rain, struggle for survival, eviction, superstition, hunger and starvation.

The novel *Nectar in a Sieve*, on the ground of the social evils and their ill effects especially on women, generalizes the plight of Indian women through ages. Indians are extremely conservative and orthodox. The process of social change is a slow one, particularly in rural India. The Age Old customs are meticulously observed and any deviation from them is frowned upon and not accepted at ones. Though the novelist Kamala Markandaya has not offered any ready –made solution to the many problems and social evils facing the country but has recognized the evils and deficiencies in Indian life and society and indirectly warns her country against their ill consequences.

Though India is free from foreign rule, it is still in the clutches of social evils. And I strongly believe that a country can never develop as long as the people of it to be caught like flies in the spider's web of social evils. And a society can't be imagined without women. And the women suffer the whole society gets its reflection. *The novel Nectar in a Sieve* portrays many social evils which are still exit in this modern age. Unlike the women of novel, the modern women of India should not

accept these social evils as their fate, but should stand against them and fight for their rights.

The novel makes it evident that social evils are on rise in present societies. Ravi finds injustice everywhere in the society. It shows that rich are becoming rich, and poor are becoming poorer. Ravi was also a victim of social inequality in society. Kamala Markandaya thus treats the novel *A Handful of Rice* as a depressing and anxious one, because the world of *A Handful of Rice* is a real world. This world exists outside as well.

The novelist stresses that Urban poverty is more destructive and horrifying one compared to its rural version. At least in the village people do not lose their identity; in the cities they are reduced to ashes. Thus the novelist tries to emphasize the fact that man is also jointly responsible for other injustice. man's hunger and consequent degradation. It is a great social injustice.

Kamala Markandaya emphasizes and studies social and economic conditions and their effects on character. She observes human beings as they behave and feel in the social scene. A spirit of realism always pervades her work. Her novels describe various human foibles and human relationships. She treats the novel as a medium of expression with a specific purpose, and becomes didactic. Though her each novel contains a different theme, she is pre-eminently a social novelist.

In all her novels deals with the realities of society. Her main purpose is to present social problems which are closely related to human life. She depicts with moving realism the tragic plight of Indian society. Some critics have said that she has fictionalized the sociology of Indian society, but the fact is that her approach is absolutely realistic.

Kamala Markandaya gives special attention and studies social and economic conditions and their effect on her characters. She observes human beings as they behave and feel in the social scene. Her novels describe various human mistakes, follies and human relationships. Her main purpose is to present social problems which are closely related to human life. She displays the evils of society and makes people aware about their bad consequences. *A Handful Of Rice* and *Nectar in a Sieve* are the novels that can go hand in hand.

Both the works of Markandaya are realistic ones and displays the consequences of social issues and evils. Hunger and degradation, Gender discrimination and Men's relationships with women were examined and the cultural life of Kamala Markandaya novels was undeveloped, which was first discussed. This research also learns Kamala Markandaya rightly describes how life depends on each other. So Kamala Markandaya develops facts of the circle of life and is presented by her numerous novels, which have been discussed here.

It reveals the cultural representation of Indian village life by Kamala Markandaya is the basis of her popularity. Markandaya has adequately addressed almost all of the essential aspects of human life through the broad spectrum of her novels. Having her plays and main themes as a base, one has to seek to assess their importance in the world of today. The binding link that takes place between each of the social issues; for example, inhumanity causes inequality.

Finally both the novel has its own significance and it depicts the real Indian life in which the people there who suffer from poverty and there novels teach us the complete struggle of people during post-independence and also both the novels clearly justifies the role of the women in the society and also the struggles faced by

them and here both Nalini and Rukmani had major roles. And finally both the novels which clearly depict the idea of *A Handful of Rice* in both the novel which means the struggle for *A Handful of Rice* which continues from the post-independence till today so each and everyone should be aware of our Indian economy and also they should create awareness to others.

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