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Kamala Markandaya's 'Nectar in a Sieve' as a novel of Eco-Criticism and Ecological Consciousness

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Abstract:

The purpose of this paper is to explore the rising theory of Eco Criticism, Ecological Consciousness and its role in literature, specifically Kamala Markandaya's Nectar during a Sieve. The literary critics are attracted towards the bond or union between Nature and Society and that they are listening on its study and analysis. In these post-modern days, ecology and its contribution and criticism are the many aspects for the humanistic discipline and research. There's a consciousness within the people about the environment and its balance because it is extremely important during this globalized world to form the people Environment-conscious and to save lots of the environment, many plans and schemes are being launched by the countries. Many poets and novelists became Eco- Conscious or environment conscious. Indian writers like R.K. Narayan, Raja Rao, Kamala Markandaya, A.K. Ramanujan and Bhabani Bhattacharya have used Nature as landscape and as beautiful atmosphere in their writings. In their hands, the literature has become a mode of expression about

environment and its importance in human life and universe. Environment balance or protection has become the recent issue of this time and has international importance. The planet is becoming the prey of the environmental imbalance and destructions. The healthy well-balanced environment and atmosphere is that the need of the time. It's just like the life blood for the universe. I explore the consequences that the animals and their existence have on the Indian family also because the ways in which the family utilizes, exploits, and relies on the land and its animals.

Keywords: Eco-Criticism, Ecological consciousness, Globalization, Environmental Balance.

India is a country may be a country with sort of eco-systems and with time, they need been adversely affected thanks to mankind. Literature couldn't remain unaffected from this depletion. Ecology, relatively a replacement science deals with the varied principles which govern such

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relationships between organisms and environment. Today ecology is defined because the way during which plants, animals and other people are associated with one another and their environment.

Many Indian English writers have invoked Nature and Nature elements for expressing their views. Kamala Markandaya is one among the best Indian novelists in English has also used Nature and natural elements for her effective and flawless expressions and descriptions of views. Her well-known novel 'Nectar during a Sieve' is that the fine example of the depiction and use of nature imagery. The ecological consciousness is clearly depicted during this novel.

Eco- Criticism is that the study of the environment's relationship to citizenry in literature (Heise 638). It focuses on how the nonhuman and human function together and ultimately affects each other. Some factors of these interactions are "how culture shapes the perception and uses of natural environments... and the way risk scenarios, crises and disasters amplify or reduce socio-cultural differences" (Heise 638). For instance, the characters in Markandaya's novel are during a primarily agricultural environment. Therefore, they're more hooked in to the land for survival. The disasters of environment that the families face are

monsoons and droughts serving as an example, focuses on the families dependable on their available natural resources. When faced with these calamities, the people of the village become common allies within the go after survival. The insensitive environmental effects don't change consistent with race, ethnicity, or socio economic status. Alongside plants, weather, and other varying ecological factors, animals are a part of the connection between nature and citizenry. The animals within the environment play a task within the theory, more often than not, by acting as an immediate symbol of one or more of the characters. Clearly, Markandaya's Nectar during a Sieve lends itself to an eco- critical reading.

Many eco-critical theorists see animals as a big aspect of the connection among man, literature, and nature. Though critical animal studies, "The otherness, the exploitation, and therefore the oppression of the animal are sometimes a transparent metaphor... for humans' the oppression of humans" (Heise 640). In Nectar during a Sieve, the bullock is one animal that acts as a metaphor for Rukmani's struggles. On their journey to seek out their son, Rukmani and Nathan seek the assistance of a carter. He seats the 2 among the various stacks of skins already occupying his full cart. Rukumi notices that the bullocks are pulling the cart when it stops.

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She sees a significant injury on one among the bullocks, but it obediently continues to tug the cart. The injury reaches its peak when Rukmani and Nathan finally reach the town. She notices that the wound had become infected: *“more skin had been eaten away and trickles of blood were running down the edges”* (Markandaya 141). The poor animal had been struggling the whole journey, but keeps pulling the cart. Under eco-critical theory, the bullock stands as a logo for Rukmani’s festering sorrows that haunt her throughout the novel. For instance, Rukmani loses her son, Raja, when the tannery men issue him a fatal blow to the top. The family is left to organize his body for burial. Rukmani also evidences the slow retrogression of her youngest son, Kuti. Every day, she must watch him grow hungrier and weaker, until he cannot survive. The family must bury a second son. She battles extreme famine and poverty for the bulk of her life, yet throughout every hardship she encounters, she keeps pulling her life behind her.

During one among the various times Rukmani and Nathan admire their land; Rukmani takes particular notice of the birds that inhabit it freely, happily, with little to no human interaction. She remembers the kingfishers, flamingoes, and paddy birds that when inhabited the water. These birds symbolize Rukmani’s

life before the tannery, bright, healthy birds living together with the land. The tannery’s effects range far and wide. Soon the sole animals at the rice paddies are *“crows and kites and such scavenging birds, looking forward to the town’s offal”* (Markandaya 69). The tannery brought an equivalent change in Rukmani and Nathan that it brought within the birds. The family scavenges for food and water, sells most of their possessions, and must invade others.

The theme of this novel is that the psychological state resulting from a clash between Western value systems and Indian value systems. The juggernaut of progress, the tannery with all its resultant pollution and corruption which it engenders, stands for the Western value system of Crass Materialism and Agro-industrialism, while the idyllic rural life as depicted by Rukmani (the narrator – heroine) stands for Indian rural value systems.

“..... The tannery that pollutes the vernal atmosphere of the village with its smells and clamours and corrodes the value of the people is the main target of Rukmani’s attack. She concedes that it brings in more money; but there are counter-balancing evils. Greater Commercialization, an alien population,

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labour unrest and the death of a son are some of its consequences.”

Rukmani and her husband Nathan are denied even the land they toiled. They shift to a city and work as stone breakers during a quarry. Nathan dies under the strain and Rukmani returns with Puli, the labourer, she has adopted as her son. Nathan and Rukmani were the youngsters of the soil and thrown out of the soil, they lost their life. Thus the ecological destruction resulted within the shattering of the family and serene village lifetime of Rukmani and Nathan.

Thus, rethinking this novel leads us to conclude that the basis explanation for ecological destruction can't be reduced to patriarchy; environmental problems aren't thanks to an andocentric attitude but rather to an anthropocentric attitude. This paper thus tries to offer an alternate formulation to the prevalent Eco-feminist discourse, claiming for a non-dichotomist view of the exploitation of nature. Hence, we cannot draw slot in gender into watertight compartments that reduce patriarchy to the basis explanation for gendered and environmental exploitation. In our view, this study

has been worth undertaking for 2 reasons; firstly, this ecological concern compel us to increasingly concentrate to such issues; and secondly, this analysis has consisted during a new reading of a specific Indian English novel, helping us understand Green Literature and therefore the possible contribution of Indian English fiction to alternative perspectives on Eco-feminist discourse.

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