

Exploring Family Bonding in Markandaya's Novels

Aasif Rashid Wani

Research Scholar, Department of English,
Sanchi University of Buddhist-Indic Studies,
Barla-Raisen (M.P.)

Dr. Naveen Kumar Mehta

Associate Professor & I/c Head-Deptt of English,
Sanchi University of Buddhist-Indic Studies
Barala Raisen

Abstract

Family is the elementary institution in any civilization. It is very important of an individual in order to develop the better future. It is only a family who can develop a good individual and an individual can build up better family and better family can build a better society. From the subsistence of the world, families play a vital responsibility in the life of child which shows that family is the first institution where children teach about society and culture at large, which helps them in observing the things easily. In the whole universe parents make their full efforts for their children and teach them how to live in society and how to honor the society. Also in India parents are more concern about the respect of society and they transfer the same things to their children and always worried about the betterment of their children. Parents are more worried for a girl child and they more concern about her marriage rather than her education. Marriage has also great importance in Indian culture where parents are responsible for her daughter before marriage and after marriage husband is ready to take care of his wife as husbands are considered the sheltering tree. It is the wish of every Indian parent that their children must develop better habit and follow the gracious path of living so, that they can contribute to society. Literature is the best tool through which family relationship is exhibited. Writer from different genres tried their best to describe the theme of family relationship in their works. It is not confined in a particular genre. Without relationship it is very difficult for author to develop an authentic plot. Novelists tried their best to highlight the culture and the role of communities in a society through which the culture is developed. In Indian writing in English only male authors did not contribute but women authors present their equal contribution in form of writing. Indian English women

novelists delineate the family values in their works so that the readers understand the family value system which will help them in build the good nation. In this background, the present paper aims to explore the family relationship in selected Indian English women novelists.

Keywords: Diaspora, Family Relationship, Indian Values, Father, Daughter, Husband.

Introduction

Indian writing in English is deeply connected with the traditional scenario of the Indian soil. As a literary genre, it has contributed towards the formation and the reformation of the processed identity of the nation as a whole. Indian writing in English has gained its popularity across the globe. From generation to generation authors produced literature accordingly. Though India was colonized under Britishers and the authors did not get the full chance so that they express their thoughts through writing. Apart from that the entire writers from pre to post independence have made their great contribution in Indian writing in English. Authors showed the rich tradition and culture of India and how the elders' members of the family teach their younger's about their traditional culture. In Indian writing in English women novelists made their equal contribution and achieved great admiration across the world. They are known for their writing style. They depicted different issues like man-woman relation, filial relationships, and wife-husband relationship in their respective novels. Authors like kamala Markandaya, Shashi Deshpande, Anita Desai, Bharati Mukherjee and Manju Kupur described the concept of family relationship in their respective works in a detailed manner. Indian women novelists have heralded a new era and have earned many laurels both at home and abroad. They have shown their worth in the field of literature both qualitatively and quantitatively and are showing it even today without any hurdle.

Kamala Markandaya is a noted figure in Indian writing in English. She has been revolutionary author especially in perspectives of human relationships. Human relationship is the core issue in her novels. The main elements of family relations are parent-child relationship and husband - wife relationship. Family plays a vital role in the life of human beings. It works as a sheltered grove in the life of a person to fit into a larger social context. The filial ties, therefore often have a long-lasting influence. Moreover, the child's mother and father are given and fixed. It is a part

of the given order of nature. Kamala Markandaya favours greater freedom, trust and understanding between the parents and children. Leland H. Stott, a great psychologist emphasizes the value of the parent – child relationship saying: “Psychological research suggests that the prevailing quality of the experience the child has with his parents, particularly the mother during early childhood is of paramount importance.” (Stott, 314) She portrays the various aspects of Eastern-Western outlooks in their behaviour. She depicts that harmony of relationship is engulfed by circumstances and at times results in discord in relationship.

In Markandaya’s first novel, the feeling of a daughter has been described in a very touching manner. Markandaya seems to point out the fact that girls are more attached to parents and show more affection for them. In *Nectar in a Sieve* Rukmani is a daughter of village headman. At a very tender age of twelve, she shows considerable understanding for her parents’ limitations. She accepts their decision regarding her marriage ungrudgingly. She remembers her wedding day when her mother “in the door way, no tears in her eyes but her face bloated with their weight bids her farewell”. (*Nectar in a Sieve*, 3) She does not complain or show any resentment, for being married beneath her: “To reduce dissonance, people emphasize the positive aspects of the chosen object while emphasizing the negative and deemphasizing the positive aspects of the unchosen object.” (Baron & Bryne, 17) Rukmani appreciates the positive contribution of her father and feels grateful to his foresight.

“It was my father who taught me to read and write. People said he did it because he wanted his children to be one cut above the rest; perhaps so, but I am certain that he also knew that it would be a solace to me in affliction, a joy amid tranquility”. (*Nectar in a Sieve*, 11)

The real worth and strength of a relationship is judged in need and adversity. Ira, Rukmani's daughter who is abandoned by her husband because of her being barren also proves it. Through the character Ira, Markandaya shows that the relationship between Ira and her parents suggests that children are obedient meek and submissive as long as the parents are responsive to their need. Ira takes to prostitution to save her parents’ family from starvation. Her parents were also aware about her mean work. To Nathan's utter dismay, she goes out of the house despite his efforts to check her:

“Where do you go at this hour?”

“It is better not to speak.”

“I will have an answer.”

“I can give you none.”

Nathan's brows drew together: She had never before spoken to him in this manner. Looking at her, it seemed to me that almost overnight she had change... "I will not have it said- I will not have you parading at night." Tonight and tomorrow and every night, so long as there is a need. I will not hunger any more, I think he laid a restraining hand on her: for I heard her say, "Let me pass," and there was a slight rustling sound as she withdrew from his grasp. (*Nectar in a Sieve*, 99)

Nevertheless, Nathan and Rukmani are not possessive in their love for their children. Despite adverse circumstances and great suffering, they remain kind to their children. Nathan and Rukmani feel that a time comes when the parents lose their hold upon the thoughts and acts of their own children. In the starting of the adulthood, the children are not free as Arjun and Thambi handover their wages to Rukmani, their mother, to spend as she likes but the strike in the tannery reveals the fact that Arjun and Thambi have grown-up. Rukmani vividly describes the conversation that tells a lot about their grown-up sons:

“What has happened?” We ask with trepidation. They are still our sons but, suddenly they have outgrown us. "Trouble", they say. “We asked for money and they took from us our eating time.” I bring out some dried fish and rice cakes. They are ravenous. "More money," I say, "What for? “What for?” One echoes. “Why, to eat our fill, and to marry, and for the sons we shall beget.” And the other said, “No it is not enough.”(*Nectar in a Sieve*, 64)

The setting of *Two Virgins* is a South Indian village. There is a family there consisting of Appa(father), Ama(mother), a widowed sister of Appa named Aunt Alamelu, the two daughters, Lalitha and Saroja and perhaps two sons who remain shadowy figures throughout the novel and who are referred to as boys employed in town. The central consciousness through which the story is unfolded is the younger of the two sisters, Saroja. She is also the embodiment of self-

knowledge in a particular kind of social organization. This self-knowledge, Saroja gradually comes to have in the course of the novel.

Kamala Markandaya makes the two sisters different, so that the two sisters have their individual self-knowledge by the end of the novel. "Lalitha and Saroja are in some respects alike and yet, in certain other respects different. Significantly, the two sisters go to two different schools Lalitha to an expensive and "superior" school run by an Anglo-Indian named Miss Mendoza, while Saroja goes to the traditional school in the same village. The father's liberalism, whose seed was sown in him the days of the national struggle during the pre-Independence period, makes him more inclined towards Lalitha. Aunt Alamelu stands on the opposite pole and represents Hindu traditionalism with all its attendant superstitions and narrownesses but without the pitfalls to which "Modernism" in the social organization existing in the village—where for example, a woman; if she becomes pregnant before marriage, is ruined and branded for life is exposed. The "modernism" that Lalitha imbibes at Miss Mendoza's school is only cheap sophistication which has a tinsel quality about it in the shabby social life in a village. Combined with this is her physical attractiveness over which is spread the tepid gloss of raw sexiness.

While the father is haggling with Mr. Gupta for money for their return journey, Devraj, Gupta's assistant flirts with Saroja and wants to exploit her sexually as Gupta did exploit Lalitha. Saroja is hungry for sexual pleasure as Lalitha has been. Both the sisters have derived this sexiness from their mother but she has, however, greater control over herself and repulses Devraj; particularly because she is afraid that she will come to grief like her sister. Saroja longs to be back to her village home and feels happy when she comes home with her parents.

Lalitha goes to the exclusive school run by Mrs. Mendoza and learns to dance around the maypole and to talk mincingly about culture, religion and society. The Christian environment at school adds strength to the individualistic strain in her. Aunt Alamelu has cause enough to accuse her and her parents about the way she has been brought up:

“Maypoles, dancing around them and such practices, it is a fitting pastime for our young Hindu maidens? And simpering with young men and flaunting themselves in films and such like, is there any propriety in it; no, it is shame - shame, totally contrary to the code of our youth for a thousand years.... It is ended at our peril, Brother, she said, it is not for us, puny denizens of this immoral age, to question

the wisdom of our ancient mentors.... You have given your children rights,
Brother, she said, and they have come home to roots, (Two Virgins, 176-177

Concluding Remarks

Filial relationship is an epitome of human life. The children got its identity from their parents and the parents are also bestowing a new concept or meaning of their life, only because of their Childs. The ties between parents and Childs are the most important because they are introducing their children to the world. In the whole world only parents take interest in developing their children. In Filial relationship, the ties between the children and their parents are very close to each other. In general we see that mother is very close to their children as compared their father. Thus filial relationship is the key of any relationship. Every parent wishes that their children choose right path in their life. They want all round development but they never prepare their children to face the hard facts of life. Love, care and respect are also important in any relationship, particularly in wife-husband relationship- parent-child relationship. It is the duty of every husband to take care of his wife and respect her feelings, emotions and sentiments. After marriage girls are feeling isolation in her husband's house, because they did not understand the feeling. Isolation, murder or suicide is not the way to tackle any relationship. Mutual understanding is the most important tool in any relationship particularly in wife-husband relationship.

Work Cited

- Allan, Graham A. *Sociology of Friendship and Kinship*. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1979.
- Baron, Robert A. & Donn Bryne. *Social Psychology: Understanding Human Interaction*. London: Allyn and Bacon Inc., 1977.
- Markandaya, Kamala. *Nectar in a Sieve*. Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 2003.
- Markandaya, Kamala. *Two Virgins*, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1984.
- Sarma , S. Krishna, "Two Recent Novels of Kamala Markandaya", Triveni, 1976, Vol XLV.
- Stott, Leland H. *Child Development*. New York: Rinehart and Winston, 1967.