

PalArch's Journal of Archaeology  
of Egypt / Egyptology

**MARGINALIZATION IN INDIAN DIASPORIC WRITINGS – A STUDY  
OF SELECT NOVELS OF KAMALA MARKANDAYA AND BHARTI  
MUKHERJEE**

**Dr. K.Venkat Satish<sup>1</sup>, Mula. Mary Madhavi<sup>2</sup>**

**<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of English, Rgukt, IIIT, Srikakulam  
AP-India (Research Supervisor)**

**<sup>2</sup>Research Scholar, Department of English, Bharatiya Engineering Science & Technology  
Innovation University (BESTIU) Gownivaripalli, Gorantla Mandal, Anantapur, Andhra  
Pradesh.**

**Dr. K.Venkat Satish , Mula. Mary Madhavi , Marginalization In Indian Diasporic  
Writings – A Study Of Select Novels Of Kamala Markandaya And Bharti Mukherjee ,  
Palarch's Journal Of Archaeology Of Egypt/Egyptology 18(10), 78-82. ISSN 1567-214x.**

**Keywords: Marginality, British rule, pre independence, alienation, diasporic literature,  
Indian Diaspora literature and migration.**

**Abstract:**

The contemporary Indian women writers reinforced modern Indian English literature. They have highlighted various chronicle issues facing by women since ages. Women who have come forward to prove their efficiency in various spheres are subverted by patriarchal society. Some of the women like Kamala Markandaya, Bharati Mukherjee, Gita Hariharan, Chitra Banerjee, Kiran Desai, Jhumpa Lahiri, Meena Alexander, Sujata Bhatt, Anjana Appachana and other famous novelists who migrated to foreign lands have penned their voice on Diaspora. This Diasporic literature is one of the parts of Indian English literature. They have shed light on marginality, migration, identity and isolation. The present article throws light on the marginality in Indian diasporic writings from select novels of Kamala Markandaya and Bharti Mukherjee in diasporic literature. It reflects on definitions of Marginality defined by literary theorists. Migration is one of the luring concepts during pre independence among Indians who generally

thrust to migrate to England. it is a globally known factor that many countries in the world are under the clutches of British. Their domination raided on Indians for two hundred years. Over the time, the writers who had migrated to England mirrored their suffering through the characters in their novels. Nectar in a Sieve, Possession are the famous novels written by Kamala Markandaya and Nowhere Man and Jasmine are belonged to Bharti Mukherjee. Marginality faced by the characters in these select novels is clearly shown in this article.

## **Introduction**

The theory of Diaspora in literature has great influence in literature of every language globally. This literature is broadly known as Expatriate or Diasporic Literature. The term Diaspora Literature is a wide concept and an umbrella term which associates in all those literary works written by the authors who are away from their native country whereas these work are connected with native culture and background. In this context, Diasporic literature has its roots in view of alienation, isolation which immediately affected as a result of migration and expatriation.

Alienation, displacement, existential rootlessness, nostalgia, quest of identity are the common aspects dealt in diasporic literature. This literature has reflected the immigrant experience that brings out of the immigrant settlement. In this regard Uma Parameswaran defines:

“First is one of the nostalgia for the homeland left behind mingled with fear in a strange land. The second is a phase in which one is busy adjusting to the new environment that there is little creative output. The third phase is the shaping of Diaspora existence ....( Parameswaran 165)

The Diasporic Indians have bounded their relationship strongly with the ancestral land. There is a search for connectivity and ‘ancestral impulse’; it is an effort to look for their roots. This writing reveals experiences of diasporic Indians who have unsettled and dislocated partially. A diasporic text is to be investigated in terms of location, dislocation and relocation apart from these, there is another important feature, it is Marginalization. Many of the diasporic writers have brought out the concept of Marginality through their writings.

## **Significance of Diaspora Literature**

Diaspora is referred as “Dispersion of people from their homeland”. The term Diaspora had stereological and a spiritual dimension that implied the “gathering of the scattered”. Several theorist have a belief that the discourse and narrate the nation its ethnicity or race which are the modes of belonging and place of individuals in assurance of roots are not prized any longer when the immigrants are thinks in different approaches about their relations to the new place, home and their past. Moreover, the significant change is noticeable in the approach, location and identities of Diaspora. The diasporic individuals and communities cannot be identified only in relation to some homeland where they all wanted to return. The concerns and sensibilities appropriately differ to a great extent as per their generation, individual perceptions and their community.

According to Safran .....

The immigrants, whatever their reason for migration be, financial, social, political, no matter whether they migrated for trade and commerce, as religious preachers, as laborers,

convicts, soldiers, as expatriates or refugees, exiles (forced or voluntary), or as guest workers in search of better life and opportunities have shared some common things as well as differences which are based on their conditions of migration and period of stay in the adopted land. Mostly the migrants suffer from the pain of being far off from their homes, the memories of their motherland, the anguish of leaving behind everything familiar agonizes the minds of migrants.” In the observation of William “they continue to relate personally or vicariously, to the homeland in a way or another, and their ethnic-communal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such relationship. (Safran, 1991:23)

It is natural that they are always in dilemma of two places, two cultures and sometimes two languages. These expatriate writers explore a new literary space on the global literary dais. The diasporic literature arises from many circumstances where the broken psyche of the immigrants put their sheds off into writing. In this context, the migrant authors feel a forceful wish for writing and with the help of their multicultural ethos and a profound understanding of socio – cultural and economic truths around them.

It is undeniably agreed by all the diasporic writers in the literature that whoever have preferred to find settlement in countries other than home country. The major reason behind the travel of these people is to explore, to leave behind the familiar spaces or move out into foreign soil or to reach out the boundless blue skies to find survival or livelihood. As Salman Rushdie asserts, the immigrant, the man without frontiers, is an archetypal figure of our age. (Rushdie, 2002:115)

It is not that diasporic writing is only begun as a trend in 20<sup>th</sup> century trend. There are many evidences in the history of prominent writers who have migrated to another land from their home country and leaving their community. T.S Eliot had moved Eastward across the Atlantic whereas W.H. Auden went into the opposite direction and Sylvia Plath, Ezra Pound, Samus Heaney were also relocated themselves even before the term ‘Diasporic sensibility had brought into vague as regular use in the literary sphere’.

### **Reflection of Marginality in Kamala Markandaya’s select novels**

Kamala Markandaya and Bharti Mukherjee are prominent Diasporic novelists raised their voice against discrimination, marginality in both foreign and home lands through their novels. Kamala Markandaya was born in 1924 she was an Indian novelist and also a journalist

Her writings are ever symbolized for boldness, identity, individuality, freedom and against marginality. Output of her eleven novels Kamala Markandaya had become one of the distinguished and established writers in India today. India is a country of her birth whereas England is her country of her abode. Her writings completely reveal the cultural interaction and synthesis of these two countries. It is an accepted truth that Kamala Makandaya is a product of both oriental and occidental cultures and she is able to write her experience filtered through the consciousness of her fictional characters.

The women characters in her novels are icons of inequality, social realism and marginality done by the society and family. The character Rukmini in *Nectar in the Sieve* struggles hard to meet both ends of the family. She is insisted for children by her husband. She is taken for granted to give birth to children whom they couldn’t afford to feed them in later times. Rukmini is suffered with hunger for long time whereas she tries to feed her children with the help of neighbors.

Though the family is poverty stricken yet she tries hard to feed her children. Her daughter Ira who is expelled by her husband in the name of infertility is another burden of Rukmini.

The unavoidable circumstances throw Ira into prostitution and eventually give birth to an alibi child. She cannot recent with her husband. She is ill-treated and abused by her in laws. Rukmini's other children also fought to the edge of their energy to fulfill the family needs yet the story ended in a tragic manner. All the characters in the story faced marginality at one or the other context due to their poverty, illiteracy and helplessness. Banumathe Balan opines "Nectar in a Sieve" is the sad story of a large poverty stricken Hindu family in a remote rural village in Southern India which ended up in poverty and grief".

In *Nowhere Man*, Srinivas, the protagonist of the novel is torn between two cultures. His identity as an immigrant from the East is demeaned in the name of his color and made him isolated in the foreign land. His wife Vasanta who dreamed about their career was also marginalized on the foreign soil. Both of her children are born and brought up in England but they are not received whole heartedly by natives of England. After many series of unfortunate incidents Srinivas life is ended misery due to his neighbor's extreme racism, marginality towards non-natives of that country. In other words, their toil is valued rather than their identity. Kamala Markandaya explained this ruthless fact through this novel. Gyan Prakash, points out in his essay "If the colonial discourse produced to 'reformed' other, the Anglicized Indian...who resembled the English...the strategy of assimilation acknowledged a recalcitrant difference."

*Possession* is another novel of Kamala Markandaya. The novel deals with a boy who has an in born talent in painting from a remote village. His mettle is identified by Lady Caroline Bell who has knowledge about art. She takes him to England where she intends to avail coaching under the Western tradition. It is an undeniable factor that Valmiki cannot accustom to Western culture and eventually, returns to his village. In another way Caroline has taken advantage of Valmiki's family's hesitations and bulldozed them in an intellectual way. She immediately had taken away the boy to her country and joined him in a school forcibly to learn painting. These series of incidents have made Valmiki lost faith in Caroline. His mind is confined to his homeland. He doesn't want to be in the clutches of Caroline or adopt Western culture. The author has deliberately expressed his woes and sorrows, conflicts and confusion between his own land and foreign land. He ultimately rejected Western culture, lavish life style and comfortable living in view of Caroline. He reaches his village and continues his living as simple as possible. The readers are able to understand suppression of the boy's feelings and his struggle to overcome domination of Caroline by whom he had been marginalized.

### **Marginality is highlighted in Bharati Mukherjee's Novels**

Bharti Mukherjee is another versatile writer from Diaspora literature whose writings are synonymous of sensibility and manifest characters intellectually by confronting difficulties of transplantation and assimilation as the surviving tools. Mukherjee is a migrant who had lived in diverse cultural societies and the experience which she has gained vitalized her to fictionalize the migratory experience and marginality in both foreign and home lands. Her life in India, Canada and the United States enabled to render the true picture of migrants as a trace of experiences. She recalls her own works as "Stories of broken identities and discarded languages". She assumes the identity transition that has been experienced by herself in her writings.

The novel *Jasmine* is one of the famous novels written by Bharati Mukherjee. The protagonist in the novel is adventurous from the village of Hasnapur who migrates to America and encounters in the later times with identity crisis, marginality and difficulties turned her a strong woman. This novel wove together of the current scenario and past memories which in turn displays the shifting of her multiple identities. Her primary change in identity and facing marginality among her own people and in foreign land are revealed gradually in the novel. Initial change in terms of identity befalls after her marriage to Prakash who passionately changes Jyoti to Jasmine. In the novel Bharati Mukherjee expresses about marginality and identity as

We are outcasts and deportees, strange pilgrims visiting outlandish shrines, landing at the end of tarmacs, ferried in old army trucks where we roughly handled and taken to roped-off corners of waiting rooms where surly, barely wakened customs guards await their bribe. We are dressed in shreds of national costumes, out of season, the wilted plumage of intercontinental vagabondage. We ask only one thing: to be allowed to land; to pass through; to continue. We sneak a look at the big departure broad one the tourists use. Our cities are there; too, our destinations are so close, but not yet, not so directly. We must sneak in; land by ight in little – used strips... What country? What continent? We pass through wars, through plagues. I am hungry for news, but the discarded papers are in characters which I cannot read. (*Jasmine*-101)

It is extremely pathetic that she was brutally raped by Half Face after landing in America and wasn't willing to bend or accept in the name of fate. She burns her husband's suit in the hotel which may be considered as an act which reflects her limitations established traditions. The marginality she has faced in foreign land leads her to have inconstant life. She adopts it constantly every movement in terms of her situations. Mukherjee has created a native heroine who taught the world to overcome obstacles of life, to survive and to live.

### **Conclusion**

Indian diasporic writings express themes of alienation, isolation and marginality as common problems in both home and foreign lands. These writers emphasize on re-proving their identity and the difference what natives and non natives have towards them. They have mirrored every minute difficulty that they have gone through in alien land. Though they have one or the other reason for settling in other land, they are treated as non natives in foreign country and nonresident citizens in their own country. Characters in these writers' novels are evident of suffering and marginality. (Extend the conclusion)

### **References**

1. Mukherjee, Bharati, "*Jasmine*". New York Grove. 989. Print
2. Mukherjee, Bharati. "*Darkness*". Markham, Ontario: Penguin 1985. Print
3. Jose Chrisna "*An Analysis of Identity In Bharati Mukherjee's jasmine*" (*Quest Journals*) *Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science* 6.9 (2018): 69-70
4. Jha Rekha "*The Novels of Kamala Markandaya and Ruth Jhaval: A Study in East – West Encounter*", Prestige Books, New Delhi.
5. Markandaya Kamala, "*Nectar in a Sieve*", Sagar Publication, New Delhi.
6. Iyengar, K.R. Srinivas "*Indian Writing in English*" sterling, New Delhi, 1989, p.439.
7. Markandaya Kamala, "*A Silence Desire*", London, 1961.