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**‘NEGOTIATING BETWEEN THE HUMAN AND THE
NONHUMAN’: REPRESENTATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES
AND CONCERNS IN KAMALA MARKANDAYA’S *NECTAR IN A
SIEVE***

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Abstract:

Nature comprises an important domain of literature. Reading systematically any text from the aspect of nature centered approach, is known as ecocriticism, a distinctive branch of literary criticism appearing since the late 1970s. Ecocriticism is a systematic and interdisciplinary study of the relationship between literature and environment with a view of spreading consciousness of the man-made environmental exploitation and damage for the greater sake of humanity. Ecocritics explore human attitudes toward the environment as expressed in text or writing on the natural world. Like the ecocritics, Kamala Markandaya (1924-2004) was greatly concerned with Nature as well as environmental damage. An ‘eco-conscious’ writer, Markandaya deals with the environmental issues in her maiden novel *Nectar in a Sieve* (1954) if looked from the lens of ecocriticism. The present paper attempts to examine Markandaya’s *Nectar in a Sieve* from the ecocritical perspectives and it aims at projecting how the novelist represents within the fictional canvas the interface between the human life and the natural world and how the environment is challenged and its aftermath

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on the rural life, and finally the author's attitude towards the environmental loss on the wake of rural industrialization in modern India.

Keywords: Ecocriticism, human, Nature, environmental crisis, impact, rural, industrialization.

What is beautiful is beneficent:
O goddess Nature, in your beauteous world
No harm can ever happen.
--- Tagore

Introduction

Nature is a prerequisite part of life. It is also an important ingredient of literature. As man has a close kinship with nature, the writers often resort on the natural world in reflecting the diverse experiences of human life. Literature of all ages is found to be replete with a rich description of natural world as far as the poetic and literary treatments of man-nature relationship are concerned. "Every text, as Bhaktin argues, is a dialogue open for further comments from other points of view. There is no conclusion" (qtd in Glotfelty, xxxiii). Hence, reading and examining systematically the piece of writing or any text from the 'other viewpoints' or the aspect of nature gave birth to the concept of 'ecocriticism', an "earth centred critical approach to literary studies" (Garrard 3) which appeared in the late 1970s but started developing in the 1990s. Few years before the publication of *The Ecocriticism Reader* (1996) by Glotfelty and Fromm, which gave a new impetus to the concept of ecocriticism, it was William Rueckert who in 1978 coined the term 'ecocriticism' in reading and interpreting literature in the lens of environmental thoughts. Ecocriticism, an ecological philosophy known by different names such as "green studies", aims at a systematic and interdisciplinary reading of the relationship between literature and environment. Glotfelty's definition of ecocriticism is rooted in the close accord underlying between the human and the nonhuman world in the aspect of

representation of the relationship the literary texts have with 'the natural environment' (xviii). Glotfelty raises questions to outline the nature and aspect of ecocriticism in his book *The Ecocriticism Reader* thus:

How is nature represented...? How do our metaphors of the land influence the ... humankind's relationship to the natural world?... In what ways and to what effect is environmental crisis seeping into contemporary literature and popular culture? ... As a critical stance, it [ecocriticism] negotiates between the human and the nonhuman" (xix).

Thus, ecocriticism studies both literature and environment by relating ecological concepts to a text and examines the close interface between the human and the non-human or nature portrayed in the text. It is the study of the environment's relationship to human beings in literature. It points out the ways the nonhuman and the human interact together and ultimately affect one another. Nature in the ecocritical view is not mere an aesthetic element, rather, should be seen as "protagonist not scenery" (Handley 94). The function of the ecocritics is manifold. They make a systematic and analytical reading of nature oriented literary and cultural work to examine how nature and the environmental issues are articulated in the textual representation. Ecocriticism also makes people aware about nature, the earth's 'basic life support system', and its damage at the evil consequences of human actions.

Objective of the paper

The present paper attempts to examine Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve* from the ecocritical perspectives. The paper aims at projecting how the novelist fictionalizes the relationship between human and non-human worlds through individual consciousness and response about the environment as well as the author's attitude towards it in the advent of rural industrialization in modern India.

Man-Nature Interface at Modern Age

Man is always dependent on Nature. There was a harmonious bond between man and nature in the ancient civilization which had paid great respect and importance to nature. The rishis and the *Upanishads* and *the Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* have emphasized nature and they worship nature as god incarnation. S. Radhakrishnan says, "In India where civilization developed in forest near to nature, there was no thought of an antagonism between man and nature, no idea of forcibly wresting treasures from nature" (11). But man's mechanical and greedy activities as well as the continuous misuse of environment in course of time, especially in the modern world have brought about the ecological destruction which has, in turn, posed threats on the entire humanity. It is well known that the increasing industrialization and urbanization for various social and economic reasons have resulted in the environmental crisis or hazards. Environmental hazards "can be either natural, human assisted, or human induced. Industrialization, urbanization, modern agriculture, and even warfare constitute some of the environmental hazards plaguing our continent" (Barua 102). In fact, humankind has become the root cause of environmental plunder through his greedy actions. In the words of Rachel Carson who recognizes a link between the human and the rest of the biosphere, "Man's attitude toward nature is today critically important simply because we have now acquired a fateful power to alter and destroy nature. But man is a part of nature, and his war against nature is inevitably a war against himself." (*The Story of Silent Spring* 2015). Unmindful of the reckless devastation as they are doing to the natural world, the modern man is at daggers drawn to the nature for easy economic benefits in the process of massive consumption of natural resources. Tagore, an apostle of humanity and environment, was against all man-made artificialities and denounced the mechanical and consumerist mode of living as the cause of ecological imbalance in his essays like *Aranyer Devta* (Forest Deity) and *Prakritir Pratishod* (Nature's Revenge). His writings promote his philosophy of the deepest harmonious relationship that exists between man and his surroundings. Gandhi cautioned the world about the evils of wholesale mechanization and industrialization. Though

Gandhi was not against technology, he envisioned that “mechanization will not only lead to industrialization, to massive urbanization, to unemployment, but will also lead to the destruction of environment” (qtd. in Tiwari141). Gandhi also emphasizes the conservation of natural resources through minimizing the consumption. He believed in the cooperation and sacrifice of both human and non-human beings for evolution. Regarding this reciprocal interconnectedness between the human and natural world, Rachel Carson opines that “it is impossible to understand man without understanding his environment and the forces that have moulded him physically and mentally” (qtd. in Norwood 335). Leo Marx in *The Machine in the Garden* (1964) acknowledges that environment influences culture, text and emotion and behavior thus shaping personality. We should consider environment as a major subject of concern. Wordsworth’s *Nutting* suggests through the protagonist’s realization human accountability to the environment.

Markandaya as an Eco-Consciousness Writer

The age-old relationship between literature and natural world has been not only more intimate but also come to be revalued and reinterpreted in this age of global warming. The nature loving writers and activists are striving to focus on the importance of sound bonding between the nature and the human society through the texts and various ways with a view to create awareness of it. Glen A. Love in his influential essay “Revaluing Nature: Toward an Ecological Criticism” (1996) remarks that “revaluing nature-oriented literature can help redirect us from ego-consciousness to eco-consciousness” (qtd. in Glotfelty xxx). The concern for ecosystem and the environmental crisis which have created an academic inclination of revaluating literature from the perspective of ‘eco-consciousness’ have drawn the attention of so many ecologically minded critics and writers, equally like the environmentalists all over the world. Kamala Markandaya (1924-2004) is such a writer who, like Amitav Ghosh, was greatly concerned with Nature as well as environmental ‘crisis’. Nature is a living entity to Markandaya. A follower of

Gandhi, she believes in the coexistence of man in tune with his natural environment. Her growing up in the South Indian rural atmosphere and her familial and cultural ethos shaped her attitude to environment. She has close affinity with natural world which weaves the setting of many of her novels. She offers a substantial amount of fictional space to deal with the environmental aspects in her maiden novel *Nectar in a Sieve* (1954) if looked from the lens of ecocriticism. Here co-consciousness also finds expression in her novels *The Coffer Dam* (1969), and *Pleasure City* (1982).

Man-Nature Interface in *Nectar in a Sieve*

Scott Russell Sanders says, "However accurately it reflects the surface of our times, fiction that never looks beyond the human realm is profoundly false, and therefore pathological" (Sanders 194). Kamala Markandaya in this novel accurately brings out both the realms of the human and the nonhuman nature. Markandaya deals with the environmental issues in *Nectar in a Sieve* with reference to the crude impact of industrialization represented by the tannery on the rural life and Nature. Based on the tragic story of Nathan and Rukmani the novel dramatizes artistically the sinister impact of industrial tannery on the south Indian peasant life as central theme, and on the parallel level, it also focuses through man-nature interaction on the resultant environmental loss leading to the 'ecocide' of village atmosphere.

Markandaya, a "mother of rural India" (Rao 57) sets the narrative in the rural natural background. The outline of the novel amply suggests that the action takes place in a typical south Indian village (nameless) where the primary means of livelihood include farming. This agricultural way of life indicates the nature dependence of the villagers who are always at the mercy of Nature. Markandaya treats Nature as a life force shaping the emotions and passions of her characters. The novel presents Nature as a controlling force of human life to bring out the pathetic condition as well as nature-dependence of Rukmani's family. Nature has been depicted, as the novelist gives voice to Rukmani, the female narrator, as "a wild animal" (Markandaya 41) to show its power. But, Nature is shown as both the

destroyer and the preserver in the novel. The destructive feature of Nature is noticed in the pitiful condition of the villagers due to the heavy monsoon rain that pours for the eight nights followed by the furious gushes, violently shaking off Rukmani's house and others. Coupled with it the midnight indomitable "storm was at its worst" (42). The vegetables and corn field hardly shows much sign of surviving. Like the uprooted trees, many villagers suffer severely. Rukmani remembers that the storm had turned the affected area "disaster and desolation" (43). The novelist again uses the image of natural countryside landscape to bring out the conflict between hope and tension of the peasant community through Nathan's cry. Nathan is afraid of the heavy rainfall in the monsoon month of June which he describes "as a bad season" (42) because of the heavy rain fall that "destroyed much" (42) of their toils and harvests. It leaves little crops, their hope for the year. Markandaya also makes a picturesque use of the drought. The devastating drought depicted as "terrible disease" (102) have swept the green pastures of the village. The destructive image of Nature is used in order to evoke a sense of despair and suffering the rural folk undergo. This natural calamity or foul weather (as in *Macbeth*) may suggest a prelude to something ominous symbolizing their further suffering and loss. Rebecca Barb remarks: "The heavy rains can be a symbol for Rukmani's sadness of saying goodbye to her first child. Markandaya implements this practice, called pathetic fallacy, in many situations of her novel. There is another monsoon the day that Nathan dies. The rain started well before Nathan's death, also acting as a form of eerie foreshadowing" (Barb 3). Markandaya also uses animal as an effective symbol. The tired bullocks dragging the cart are used as metaphor of Rukmani's ceaseless energy and struggle.

Sometimes Nature emerges as a sign of prosperity and happiness in the life of the peasants when there is required rainfall and good harvest. Rukmani recalls how her hope was rekindled with good crops. She gets excited with the seeding that "disciplines" her "body" and its "sprouting... uplifts the spirit" (107). But they get

“rich satisfaction of a gathered harvest...” (107). The novelist uses Nature not merely for scenic or aesthetic effect but also for metaphorical implication to describe Rukmani’s feelings and experiences. Rukmani’s nurturing of garden, planting the seeds and seedling echo her ample pleasure and various moods. Rukmani’s description, for example, of growing up pumpkins as “round and fleshed like young women” (144) captures coincidentally her first pregnancy. Her expressions such as her “senses opening like a flower” (23) and her earlier description of tiny ‘winged’ green ‘seedling’ (23) that draws “Rukmani’s “eager gaze” (23) increases her “excitement” (23) are indicative of her sexual maturity as well as passion. Even the ripen sweet gourd gives her ecstasy that frequented her “pulse beat” (23). Markandaya makes a symbolic use of this green growing up rural natural image to portray the sensual urge and intensification of Rukmani. One can see here Rukmani’s kinship with the land and earth. The land is another image used to depict her emotional sense of place attachment which is an important element in ecocriticism. Rukmani and Nathan have deep psychological attachment with the land as well as the village—the natural place which shapes their individual emotions and experiences. Wallace Stegner argued in *A Sense of Place* that “a place is not a place until people have been born in it, have grown up in it, known in it, died in it—have both experienced and shaped it as individuals...” (Handley 2). The rural landscape she cherishes always provides her a sense of belonging as well as happiness. She cares of land full of grains as mother earth, a continuous source of life. Rukmani says “there was land, there was hope” (182). So, their displacement from the village to the city affects their life much. Thus, the images of soil, seed and grains are “overriding symbols of life itself” (Kaur 102) germinating hope in her. Here nature with verdant green, fruits and fertile fields is a source of Rukmani’s pleasure. The seed is imaged here as fertile womb implying a link between woman and topography. In the repeated treatment of ‘seed imagery’ the novelist unearths a correlation between “woman and landscape” (Zeleny 29) in terms of procreation and cycle of life that associates both human and Nature.

The nature-culture dichotomy, another relevant aspect of ecocriticism is apparently visible in the conflict between the industrial enterprise and the environmental life, which is presented in the mode of contrast. As an environment conscious artist Markandaya portrays the pre-industrialized pristine rural life and the post-industrialized polluted village life of Rukmani and Nathan to highlight (through the nature–culture conflict) the huge loss the tannery industry causes on the village environment and ecosystem. The following passage that depicts Rukmani’s journey by cart to her husband’s village is crammed with elegant description of the realm of pre-industrialized natural world. Rukmani enjoys the sight and sounds of beautiful pleasant nature during her journey: “We rested a half-hour before resuming our journey. The animals, refreshed, began stepping jauntily again, tossing their heads and jangling the bells that hung from their red-painted horns” (5). The calm atmosphere in the green grove was echoed with the chirping of different “birds, sparrows, bulbuls, ... and parrots” (5) that she listened to her heart’s content. The warm surroundings so charmed her weary mind that she “fell asleep” (5). When Rukmani comes to the village as a new bride, she is so delighted with the natural beauty comprising of village paddy field situated beside a brook that she intends to soak her hands into its water which “was clear but not swift running” (7). This natural splendor not only enthralls the newlywed couples but also enhances their conjugal bonding. Rukmani ruminates: “While the sun shines on you and the fields are green and beautiful to the eye, and your husband sees beauty in you ... a sweet stirring in your body, what more can a woman ask for?”(8). The beauties and wonders of nature in the pre-industrialized atmosphere of the village affirm a perfect correlation between the humans and the natural environment.

If viewed from the eco-critical aspect, the text projects that the village scenic beauty turns into squalor and sordid atmosphere resulting in the loss of ecological equilibrium and biodiversity under the invasion of tremendous industrialization. The tannery is invariably associated with post-industrialized ‘crude masculine

aggressiveness' in contrast with the pre industrialized quiet 'feminine' (Marx 29) image of land. In fact, the novelist decries that the intrusion of the tannery into the village disturbs the economy as well as ecology of the village. It grabs their land, and consequently Rukmani and Nathan get displaced. Rukmani cannot accept the arrival of the tannery and its official town people because she suspects that apart from causing socio-economic crises, the tannery is a threat to the village environment. Rukmani anticipates that the tannery factory would gradually discolour "the clear soft greens ... [of] our village" (135) and it would also break "its cool silences with clamour" (135). Rukmani senses that the tannery encroaches to devour the rustic greenery with its hues and cries, filth and foul smell. This denatures the rural landscape as well as affects human behavior with coarseness. Rukmani laments the departure of "sweet quiet of the village life" swallowed by the "dirty bazaars" (48). Now she feels vexed with "all the noise and crowds everywhere" (48) in the village where, as Rukmani notices, the youth lazily wander in the 'dirty' roads and 'bazaars' and make indecent, mechanical and "uncouth behaviour" (48). It implies the nature-man bond gradually tearing apart. Here, the novelist, like Tagore and Gandhi, tries to suggest that the more the man will be dissociated from the nectar of nature, the more he will be mechanical and coarse. Because it is traditionally believed that all the things are integral essence of the mother earth. Raymond Williams says "The idea of nature contains, though often unnoticed, an extraordinary amount of human history" (67). He, in similar view of Rachel Carson, continues, "If we alienate the living processes of which we are a part, we end, though unequally, by alienating ourselves" (Williams 84). Hence, the humans as the dominant biological species in "the non-anthropocentric biotic community" (Nelson 744) should now play "an especial responsibility to his fellow creatures as well as to himself" (Thomas 1146) for holistic development.

Quite contrary to that, the natural sweet fragrance of the paddy field and fruit garden that pleased the eyes of Rukmani before is now swapped by the foul

nauseating urban squalor and smoke emitting out of the tannery. It causes many physical hazards and pollutes the fresh air in the countryside. The tannery also causes sound pollution as Rukmani recalls the working of the officials and workers: "At night we saw their fires and by day we heard their noise, loud, ceaseless, clangor and din, chatter, sometimes a chanting to help get a heavy beam into position, or hoist a load of tin sheeting to the roof" (29). The sound hazards engender the space of the birds and insects in the village. Even birds and insects cease to exist. Rukmani, despite being a peasant woman, discerns the changing ecological scenario, and in response to Kunthi's praise of the tannery Rukmani makes the tannery responsible for all the "shouting and disturbance and crowds" (31) which, she thinks, makes: "Even the birds have forgotten to sing, and moans for the loss of "their calls" (31). Rukmani recollects in pain the disappearance of birds and insects hovering over the green marshy field which soothed her soul: "We gazed at the paddy fields spreading rich and green before us, and they were indeed beautiful" (71). Now after the tannery comes in to operation she regrets the absence of the normal verdant fragrance and the "silencing of birds" (Carson), the familiar sweet chirping song of unknown birds and insects: "Now birds came no more, ... except crows and kites and such scavenging birds, ... or sometimes a palpitta, skimming with raucous cry"(71).

Like the humans, the nonhuman agents— birds, insects and animals—having more hearing sensitivity get seriously affected and flee in the process of urbanization. It is very significant that the birds' migration and departure as the place is no more suitable for living is surely a suggestive of ecological instability as well as the loss of biological diversity. The ornithologists explain this as a damage of biodiversity. A study of Eastern Bluebirds discovered that "Increases in environmental noise tended to be associated with smaller brood sizes and were more strongly related to reductions in productivity" (Kight et al. 1989), because sometimes female partners "are unable to hear the vocal displays of males" (Kight et al. 1989).

The sound pollution is also echoed in the reference to the rock pit where Rukmani and Nathan, engaged as workers, feels troubled with the intolerable blast: "As we drew near, the din grew louder; we had to shout to make ourselves heard" (170). The loud nonstop noise and the sandy atmosphere in the quarry creates hazardous situation for the dwellers as well as animals and birds resulting in their flight. This is detrimental for entire eco-system. All these environmental crises, as the novelist argues, are the unavoidable result of sinister consequences of long term urbanization without paying heed to the preservation of natural resources. It is interesting to note that the birds' migration shown in the novel is very symbolic of the migration of the villagers and also interesting that man and birds leave the village for similar reason—the monstrous tannery. The tannery disrupts the ecology of the village in a crude manner. The entire ecology is threatened, so to say, 'strangled' with loud 'clamor' (Adkins 94) of the tannery works and workers.

Thus, the tannery with smoke, noise and dinginess is symbol of industrial power. It appears in the 'sleepy' village suddenly shattering the harmony of green village, like the locomotive machine in Irving's *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*. Like the machine in the garden, the tannery, is shocking intruder upon the village world of idyllic beauty where Rukmani lived with 'satisfaction'. So we see Rukmani "who lived by the green, quiet fields" and to whom "nature still gave a muted message" (117) feels pain with this environmental problems at the beginning. However, she finally adapts, as she bemoans, with the new noisy and foul-smelling village atmosphere created by the tannery. However, the tannery emerging, like a deadly 'snake' (Kumar 86), into the pristine rural India, starts poisoning its clear unpolluted green atmosphere. This hit not only the villagers but also the wild animals and insects. The hides of the animals and insects are essential raw materials for the tannery factory. In fact, the tannery industry causes environmental cruelty and violence by killing huge number of wild creatures. In fact, the tannery factory required 'raw materials' of various creatures which were supplied from "thousands

of skins--- goats, calf, lizards, and snake skins" (47) amassed from various regions. They were extensively processed through tanning and dying before lucrative marketing. The humans, instead of acting 'wisely towards other creatures' greedily 'take life' at random forgetting the fact that they are 'a part of entire ecosystems', to quote Clive Ponting, 'only a small part of a much greater whole' (qtd. in Desvaux 19). This capitalistic inclination is critiqued by Clive Ponting in his remark: "The crucial defect is that the earth's resources are treated as capital – a set of assets to be turned into a source of profit" (qtd. in Desvaux 20). Though profitable for the capitalist marketers, this unwanted impact of the industrial enterprise undeniably causes havoc on the tranquil village life and environment disordering man-nature equilibrium.

Markandaya also shows that apart from the tannery, the villagers too are responsible for the disruption of rural environment and biosphere. According to George B. Handley, "The human atrocities ... seem... to say that nature too has been victim of the colonial machine..." (94). Simon Dalby is of the similar view: "Human disruptions ... [in] direct destruction through hunting and fishing, and indirect damage through pollution, as a by product of many activities – either cause stress on ecosystems or, in many cases, destroy them" (298). As solely dependent on nature, the earth and the agricultural land offer Rukmani and Nathan plentiful, but their return is meager. The reason of poor Rukmani's collection of dung from the field is it is "easy to sell and commanded a good price" (31). Even Gandhi considered compost as important manure for land. Despite knowing the fact that the cow dung is too rich natural nourishment to waste, she hardly utilizes it in the land for fertility. Kenny who observes Rukmani gathering the dung says: "Yet I thought you would know better, who live by the land yet think of taking from it without giving" (32). Nathan's killing of the cobra in the garden is equally detrimental for the farming and ecosystem.

The humans have the responsibility to preserve natural world for sustainable development. Ian Mcharg in *Design with Nature* says: "Each individual has a responsibility for the entire biosphere and is required to engage in creative and cooperative activities" (Ruckert 114). Gandhi as well as the deep ecologists emphasize on the minimum consumption of natural resources only for the extreme survival causes. At the same time one should make a proper utilization of it. In this context, Lesli Marmon Silko remarks, "Survival in any landscape comes down to making the best use of all available resources" (271). But we see Rukmani and Nathan and other villagers capture all the fishes available, which was harmful for crop farming as well as ecosystem. Simon Dalby says: "The realm of necessity is not the realm of freedom and political choice" (297). But, they catch all the fishes from the water of the paddy fields with "greedy hearts" (44) by using fishing net. All the fishes playing wildly in the watery paddy field got enmeshed without leaving one or none in the field, which is against the ecosystem. They forget the natural process of recycling of resources. Relics of crops and fish as healthy nutrients, like cow dung, help fertilizing the soil, which indirectly create better environment for cultivation of crops such as rice. This natural fertilization process, as Rebecca Barb says in this context, could have increased crop production for Rukmani's family (Barb 4). But their maximum consuming and utilization of natural resources indiscriminately reduces the fertility of land which could have also protected them from many farming troubles they face. While depicting the environmental evils, Markandaya also exposes how the environment in the city, though her primary concern is the rural environment, is choked through the urban experience of Rukmani and Nathan when they reach to the town in search of their son Murugan. Rukmani laments the loss of natural environment in the city "where all that was natural had long been sacrificed" (117). While in the city Rukmani notices the open sewage trench there: "what lay there open to the blue offended skies" (157). In open dirty latrine beside the lane she is astounded by the "most foul stench" (157) that emanates from the area. This may be infectious and dangerous for the humans and the

environment. So bored with the squalor urban space they determine to come back to their village, though Nathan dies on the rainy way.

The above textual references to the environmental issues bring out Markandaya's deep love for both the human and the natural environment. She is equally sensitive to the natural world comprising of plants, birds, insects and animals which play major role in the entire ecosystem. The ecocritical reading of the novel validates her deeper concern for environment as well as her earnest cry for preservation of wild life for ecological equilibrium. Like Gandhi, she is not against the technological progress, rather she believes in the harmonious existence and cooperation between the human beings and all things for evolution. As nature sensitive writer, she only reminds us about the massive ecological threat done in the process of urbanization a long ago even before the wake of ecological movements. Thus, she, like Tagore, reacts strongly to the evils of environment that challenges the interface between human and nature, and endangers the wild sanctuary and biodiversity which has become a serious issue to the environmentalists today. Jyostna Sahoo comments appropriately in this context:

Markandaya, even in the fifties, was concerned about the ecological imbalance that would be created by rapid technological advancement. She wanted to make the people aware of the helplessness of the wild life at the hand of crazy modern business magnets and technocrats. It's no wonder that in Eighties and Nineties people were made aware of the importance of ecology and there is cry for the conservation of wild life for the benefits of humanity at large. (19)

Conclusion

Markandaya in *Nectar in a Sieve* represents within the fictional canvas the interface and interconnectedness between the human life and the natural world and reveals how nature shapes and influences the vision of human beings in order to critique the man-made environmental crisis. With this view Markandaya registers her ecological vision and voice against the impact of industrialization on the typical rural

ecosystem. But she is not against technology. Like Gandhi, she as an environment conscious writer merely makes us think from the ecological aspect about the mechanical process of technological and non-sustainable development which, according to her, should not be done at the cost of natural environment. This is harmful for human civilization. A believer in the symbiotic coexistence between the human and the nonhuman, she stresses the importance of harmonious living with Nature and its creatures for a better world. She also reminds us of our individual responsibility to the Natural world. Thus, she emerges as a true lover of environment, like the ecologists who are critical of the very forces that destroy Nature, and disrupt the bond between the human and the nonhuman world.

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