

## **Exploring Marxist Ideology in the Selected Indo-Anglian Novels: Unveiling Class Struggle, Exploitation and Colonial Impact**

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### **Abstract:**

Indian English writing has been significantly influenced by Marxist thought. The different ways that Marxist concepts have been infused into Indian English writing are examined in this essay. The paper makes the case that Marxist philosophy has been crucial in addressing issues of inequality, exploitation, and social injustice in Indian society through a detailed reading of a few selected works. With a focus on themes of class conflict, exploitation, and the effects of economic systems, this essay employs a Marxist method to critically explore how specific Indo-Anglian novels embody Marxist concepts. The study analyses how authors portray class conflict, economic systems, and social ties within Indian society by looking at a few works, including Kamala Markandaya's 'Nectar in a Sieve' and Arundhati Roy's 'The God of Small Things.' The study clarifies the authors' critique of exploitation, capitalist development, and colonialism's effects on society by drawing on Marxist concepts.

**Keywords:** Indo-Anglian literature, Marxist ideology, class struggle, exploitation, colonialism, capitalist development

### **Introduction:**

During the British colonial era, when the British exploited the Indian people and raised awareness of social and economic inequality, Marxist philosophy became a strong force in India. Many Indian writers found the class struggle and necessity for revolutionary change to be appealing, as they saw the potential for these concepts to uplift and inspire the masses in their fight for liberation. Marxist theory has had a significant impact on Indian English literature, especially in the post-independence era when authors were attempting to address issues of social reform and nation-building. The goal of this essay is to examine the various ways that Marxist

concepts have been introduced into Indian English writing and the effects that these concepts have had on the growth of Indian literature.

### **Methodology:**

The essay is built on an in-depth reading of a few pieces of Indian English literature. These texts were chosen for their discussion of Marxist theory as well as their portrayal of significant themes and problems that lie at the heart of Marxist theory. To contextualize and understand these works and investigate the various ways Marxist concepts have been applied to confront the intricacies of Indian society, the study draws on a variety of critical and theoretical sources.

### **Literature Review:**

Marxist philosophy has had a considerable impact on Indian English writing, influencing how authors address issues of social injustice, exploitation, and inequality. Marxist theories, according to Ania Loomba (1998), have been particularly helpful in shedding light on the power and dominance structures that underlie social inequality in India as well as the ways that colonial and postcolonial institutions continue to support and reinforce these structures.

### **I. Class Struggle and Exploitation in ‘Nectar in a Sieve’ by Kamala Markandaya:**

Kamala Markandaya (1954) uses Marxist principles in *‘Nectar in a Sieve’* to illuminate the socio-economic disparities, class conflict, and exploitative structures that existed in rural India during the era of British colonialism and capitalist development. She highlights the struggle of the working class and criticizes the exploitative character of the current economic system while exposing the underlying contradictions and oppressive structures of society through her tale. An important contribution to both Indo-Anglian literature and Marxist literary analysis, Markandaya's novel presents a potent critique of the socio-economic conditions of her day through the use of a Marxist lens.

The gripping novel *‘Nectar in a Sieve’* by Kamala Markandaya narrates the tale of Rukmani, a destitute peasant lady who lived in rural India during the period of British colonization and industrialization. The story follows Rukmani as she navigates a variety of obstacles and goes through significant social and personal transformations.

Rukmani marries an industrious farmer named Nathan at the start of the book. They like to live in a small community where they maintain their land and raise crops. However, the forces of modernization quickly upend their tranquil existence. The introduction of cash-crop agriculture

by the British results in the commercial farming of arable land. As a result, Rukmani and Nathan are compelled to change their conventional agricultural methods in order to adapt to the changing circumstances. Rukmani and Nathan face economic hardships and struggle to make ends meet. They find themselves entangled in a web of exploitative relationships with moneylenders and landlords, who take advantage of their poverty and extract a significant portion of their earnings. The constant cycle of debt and exploitation further deepens their struggles. The couple experiences the impact of British colonialism firsthand. The novel highlights the disparities between the colonizers and the indigenous population, with the peasants being marginalized and exploited by the ruling class. The introduction of British policies disrupts the villagers' way of life, leaving them dispossessed and disconnected from their land.

As time goes on, Rukmani's family grows, and they face increasing challenges. Their son, Selvam, leaves the village to seek employment in the city, working in a textile mill. His experiences shed light on the exploitation of workers that occurs in metropolitan areas where they are subjected to severe working conditions and low pay. The novel explores the dehumanizing effects of industrialization and how it affects the lives of the working class through the narrative of Selvam. The strength of Rukmani is evident throughout the entire novel. She perseveres and is resourceful despite the challenges she meets. Relationships with her husband, kids, and friends provide her great comfort. Her unshakeable faith and commitment to supporting her family serve as sources of power. The exhaustive study of the novel shows following observations:

### **Class Struggle and Exploitation:**

Marxist ideology finds resonance in Kamala Markandaya's novel '*Nectar in a Sieve*' through its exploration of class struggle, exploitation, and the impact of capitalist development on Indian society. It is clear from an analysis of the novel's narrative structure, themes, and character dynamics that Markandaya's critique of the socio-economic injustices and oppressive structures that prevailed in rural India during the period of British colonialism and industrialization is influenced by Marxist ideals.

### **Impact of British Colonialism:**

Markandaya presents a critical examination of the effects of British colonial rule on rural India. The old rural way of life is disrupted by the adoption of new economic policies, such as the development of cash-crop agriculture and the use of arable land for manufacturing purposes.

The Marxist critique of colonialism and its effects on class relations is reflected in the displacement and disruption of the peasants' self-sufficient way of existence as well as their growing reliance on outside forces.

### **Capitalist Development and its Consequences:**

The novel illustrates how capitalist growth is encroaching on rural society. Rural inhabitants lose access to their land as industrialization grows, pushing many to move to metropolitan areas in search of work. Social hierarchies and class differences occur as a result of this urbanization. Urban life's dehumanizing elements, in which people are treated like mere commodities and are subjected to abusive labour practices, are criticized by Markandaya. This is consistent with Marxist analysis, which places a strong emphasis on the commercialization of labour and the alienation of labour under capitalism.

### **Exploitative Labor Practices:**

The novel exposes the exploitative labour practices prevalent in the emerging industries. Rukmani's son, Selvam, becomes a mill worker and faces grueling working conditions, low wages, and a lack of job security. These conditions reflect the Marxist critique of the capitalist mode of production, where the pursuit of profit leads to the exploitation of workers and the extraction of surplus value from their labour.

## **II. Colonialism and Capitalist Development in '*The God of Small Things*' by Arundhati Roy:**

*'The God of Small Things'* by Arundhati Roy is a mesmerizing novel which received the Booker award in 1997 in London, set in the state of Kerala, India and tells the story of a family and their experiences during the late 20th century.. Colonialism is an underlying theme of the novel. The book explores the legacy of British colonialism on Indian society as well as how it has affected the main characters and their daily lives. It explores the hierarchical social structure established by the colonisers, in which some racial and ethnic groups were treated as superior while others were subjugated and marginalised.

The story unfolds through the lives of fraternal twins Rahel and Estha, as well as their extended family, against the backdrop of the caste system, political unrest, and social constraints. The forbidden love between Ammu and untouchable lower-caste worker Velutha is explored in the novel. Due to the strongly rooted caste prejudices, their love defies society expectations and could have serious repercussions. The story also examines Velutha's hardships, a skilled

carpenter who is constrained by his caste and financial situation. Rahel and Estha are reunited as adults in the opening pages of the novel after several years of separation. The story then dives into their early years and the incidents that caused them to grow apart. They grow up in a complicated and oppressive family in which the strict social and cultural standards that uphold the caste system and continue disparities dominate the household. The delicate balance is upset by the arrival of their English cousin, Sophie Mol, and a sequence of tragic events follow.

The book opens with the tale of a woman named Ammu, who wishes to get rid of her irritable father. Eventually, she manages to leave for Calcutta to stay with her aunt, where she marries a man who works on the tea plantation. However, her marriage does not work out and she now stays at home with her identical twins, Estha and Rahel, her mother and brother and their aunt (Baby). Ammu's brother falls in love with an English woman at college and gets married to her and they have a daughter named Sophie.

The following section of the novel describes the incidents that caused major calamities in the family and the betrayals that practically every member of the family experienced to some extent. Young Estha goes for a movie where he is molested by a lemon vendor and this incident has affected his life forever. After that, Velutha, an untouchable, has to go through several trials after being mistakenly targeted for retaliation in the novel. Even though the kids get along well with this Velutha, they were compelled to turn against him when it came to light that he was seeing their mother on a regular basis. There is a lot of turmoil in the family as the kids discover their mother's relationship with Velutha and the kids decide to leave. But unfortunately their identical twin (Sophie) dies during the trip, and once again the twins are held accountable for it.

The situation changes when the aunt (Baby) knowingly files a police complaint that the untouchable man, Velutha is responsible for the kid's disappearance even though it was evident from a thorough investigation that he had nothing to do with it. The children were forced to provide false evidences against the man they loved the most because he was an untouchable, and the aunt wanted to save her face. As a result, Velutha dies in the police station after being subjected to cruel treatment. Due to these circumstances, the twins had to separate from each other. The boy was sent to stay with his father and the girl with the mother. Years later, when they finally meet, they realise that the only person who can truly understand them is one another. They were tortured by their remorse and had led such hollow lives as a result of the acts they had

to perform. The caste system, betrayal and loss of trust among people, hopes in minor things, and maintaining an optimistic outlook even though you know that short-lived happiness are all shown in the narrative clearly. The detailed study of the novel "The God of Small Things" reveals the following observations.

### **Colonialism:**

The novel illustrates how British colonialism continued to have an effect on Indian society long after the nation attained freedom. It examines how colonial control affected power relationships, social stratification, and structural oppression. Here are some significant examples of colonialism from the book:

**a. Social Hierarchies:** In addition to introducing a system of domination and servitude, British colonization of India strengthened already-existing caste divides. These tight social systems are a prison for the people in the book, including the upper-caste Syrian Christians and the lower-caste Paravans. The tale emphasizes how lower caste people continue to experience prejudice and discrimination even in India after independence.

**b. Laws and Regulations:** The novel demonstrates how the protagonists' lives were impacted by and moulded by British rules and regulations. Colonial judicial systems and class-biased cultural standards impose restrictions on the characters' behaviour. For instance, the repressive impact of colonialism on individual freedoms can be seen in the Love Laws, a set of unwritten guidelines that regulate romantic interactions.

**c. Language and Cultural Suppression:** Language is increasingly used as a tool of colonial authority. While the original tongues of the protagonists are undervalued, English, the language of the colonizers is linked to privilege and social mobility. The novel examines the ways in which language is employed to establish superiority and repress native cultures and identities.

### **Capitalist Development:**

"The God of Small Things" examines the effects of capitalist development in post-independence India in addition to colonialism. The following are significant aspects of capitalism growth covered in the book:

**a. Industrialization and exploitation:** The narrative illustrates how these two factors have affected the lives of the protagonists. The facility that makes Paradise Pickles & Preserves is a metaphor for how capitalism has infiltrated a traditional society. It takes advantage of the labour

of people who are considered as disposable and expendable in the pursuit of wealth, like Velutha.

**b. Socioeconomic Inequality:** In the narrative, capitalism's growth causes social gaps to deepen. Velutha and Ammu are the characters who belong to the lower classes are caught in a cycle of exploitation and poverty. The story places emphasis on how inequality and marginalisation are frequently sustained by the pursuit of wealth and profit.

**c. Commodification of Nature:** The book criticises how capitalist progress has led to the commodification of nature and the environment. It draws attention to the exploitation of resources for financial gain, loss of traditional wisdom, and damage of the natural landscape. The river, which serves as the story's focal point, is a metaphor for how capitalism's growth has caused the natural world to deteriorate and disappear.

**d. Influence of Western Consumerism:** The story also examines how Western consumerism and the consequences of global capitalism have affected many local cultures. The consumerist values promoted by Western media and multinational corporations influence the protagonists' needs and goals.

“The God of Small Things” delivers a complex and critical analysis of the legacies of colonialism and the effects of capitalist development through its complicated narrative and fascinating characters. It highlights the continual fight for social justice, the maintenance of inequality, and the negative environmental effects of these systems. A potent remark on the complexities and difficulties post-colonial cultures encounter in the face of capitalist expansion may be found in Arundhati Roy's book.

### **Conclusion:**

After the exhaustive analysis of the novel it is concluded that the novel *Nectar in a Sieve* by Kamala Markandaya and *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy clearly illustrate the struggle between the classes. Through a Marxist lens, the novels of these Indo-Anglian writers provide a profound critique of class struggle, exploitation, and the impact of colonialism and capitalist development on Indian society. The works of Kamala Markandaya and Arundhati Roy illustrate the authors' engagement with Marxist principles, highlighting the inequities and power dynamics prevalent within their respective settings. By analyzing these novels, readers gain a deeper understanding of the socioeconomic realities and the complex dynamics of Indian society as portrayed by these writers. The study of Indo-Anglian literature from a Marxist perspective

contributes to a broader discourse on the intersections of literature, ideology, and sociopolitical critique.

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