

CHAPTER 4

GENDER ANALYSIS IN THE NOVELS

OF KAMALA MARKANDAYA AND K. SURANGKANANG

Because of our social circumstances, male and female are really two cultures and their life experiences are utterly different.

(Kate Millet, *Sexual Politics*)

The reorganization of the world on a basis of sex-equality in all human relations; a movement which would reject every differentiation between individuals upon the ground of sex, would abolish all sex privileges and sex burdens, and would strive to set up the recognition of the common humanity of woman and man as the foundation of law and custom.

(Teresa Billington Grieg, *Feminist Dictionary* 158)

Woman's life has been depicted in literary works by men as well as women. Women writers appear to bring out poignancy in their suffering and strength. The remarkable quality of Kamala Markandaya's and K. Surangkanang's novels is their realistic approach in depiction of women. Indian feminist Rajeshwari Sunder Rajan emphasizes the problems of real women cannot lie outside imagined construct:

Culture...is viewed as the product of the beliefs and conceptual models of society and as the destination where the trajectory of its desires takes shape, as well as the everyday practices by which these are structured, is the constitutive realm of the subject. (Rajeshwari 10)

Therefore, the issues of women on gender inequality are one of the real dimensions that can be considered. Especially, the novel is one of the literary forms that is easily used as medium of expression. The novels of Kamala Markandaya and K. Surangkanang reveal women's experiences.

Kamala Markandaya is a modern writer. She talks about traditional role of women in society and their problems in society. H. M. Williams supports her and says:

Kamala Markandaya ... who unite in seeing the essential tragedy of India as the loss of the truly human, the truly personal beneath the welter of impersonal or social forces, whether of blind nature or of man himself in all his folly and wickedness and blindness. (Williams 40)

Indian novelist Kamala Markandaya and Thai novelist K. Surangkanang have reflected the impact of social change on women in their works. Social changes have directly led to the transformation of Thai society from a feudal to a democratic one. Hence, the social significance of Thai literary works is a landmark of the modern Thai literature that is a part of the social and political processes. The rapid change in social values can be seen in female characters of K. Surangkanang.

The basic ideology responsible for the position of women is the patriarchal system, rule of the father. It is male-centered and male-controlled in such a way so as to subordinate women to men in all cultural domains as familial, social, religious, political, economic, legal, and so on. Women were taught to accept men's power over them. This power is another dimension of gender which can be form of oppression. This is a part of the structure of gender. American feminist writer Kate Millett defined 'politics' as 'power-structured relationships.' According to British sociologist Sylvia Walby, in her work "Theorizing Patriarchy" she discusses and distinguishes six structures in contemporary patriarchy: paid employment, household production, culture, sexuality, violence, and the state.

Patriarchal system has gender inequality. Gender inequality is the root of oppression of women. Revolt against Patriarchy, capitalism, male-domination, and injustice has become the main components of feminist movement. Feminist

movement is a movement where all women raise their voice against female oppression. They have also raised their voice against their subordinate status.

As a social movement, feminism or women's liberation has pointed out certain gender patterns. The idea of feminism is that women protest the male-domination that had made women suffer many forms of oppression and suppression. Feminist movement includes such change as campaigns for married women's property rights, votes for women in the nineteenth century, and twentieth century campaigns for homosexual law reform, equal employment opportunity, women's reproductive rights, and the prevention of rape and domestic violence. Overall, the ideology of feminism is committed to the struggle for equality for women, and effort to make women become like men. As a historian Linda Gordon gives the definition of feminism as "is analysis of women's subordination for purpose of figuring out how to change it" (Gordon 107).

When gender categories are rendered unequal by social practices, the inequality has come under male-dominant society in any fields. Women suffer oppression and suppression from the male - power. Because of being women, they were treated in a different way from men. Women were treated as subordinate role to men in human history for a long time. As a famous French feminist Simone de Beauvoir mentions the second status of women as 'Other' in comparison to men as a dominating 'Subject' in her notable work *The Second Sex* (1949).

Women started challenging male power which came up in a form of feminist movement. Feminist movement was started to remove such inequality in the society. Feminism obviously came into being as a mode of literary and cultural studies in the 1970s.

Many questions arise when we talk about women in male-dominant society. Why she has got the second status in the society? And, what is her real self? In many situations, women were always treated as inferior. The main cause of her inferior status is patriarchal society where there is a vast difference between male and female. Virginia Woolf gives her argument in *A Room of One's Own* (1929) that in the

cultural process of masculine can be identified as active, dominating, and supreme while feminine can be identified as passive, inferior, and subordinated.

We can see gender everywhere. So, gender is a social construct. It is reinforced by society. Gender never allows equality. It is a set of social practices, associated to biological sex. Everything in society is practically assigned in terms of gender, for instance, colors, clothes, behaviors, toys, sports, careers, haircuts, voices, and so on.

According to R.W. Connell, the term 'gender' comes from an ancient Indo-European word-root in which its meaning is 'to produce' (generate). And, the nineteenth century Oxford English Dictionary noted 'to distinctions of sex (and absence of sex) in the objects denoted.' Therefore, people in society are categorized into two, men and women. In the general sense, gender is the idea of difference between women and men, divided by society:

In its most common usage, the term 'gender' means the cultural difference of women from men, based on the biological division between male and female. Dichotomy and difference are the substance of the idea. Men are from Mars, women are from Venus. (Connell 8)

Since childhood, girl and boy are reared according to societal norms. Children are socialized into their gender very early. So, gender effects even in the process of rearing children. And, it is a trait they recognize at a young age. As American philosopher and feminist theorist Marilyn Fyre (1983) observes that in gender, men dominate and women suffer differences. The social order reflects the differences. Erving Goffman (1976) describes gender display as:

Our human nature gives us the ability to learn to learn to produce and recognize masculine and feminine gender displays – 'a capacity [we] have by virtue of being persons, not males and females.' (Goffman 76)

Hence, these practices in personal life lead to the differences between masculinity and femininity. The attributes of person are also gendered a woman must be a woman, and a man must be man. These two cases are the social processes, known as gender difference.

Gender differences arise from the two modes, biology and social norms. Basically, the idea of gender is based on the difference between men and women. Bodies of men and women are distinct in their reproductive differences because genetic information is encoded in DNA, carried on chromosome. “There is a complex group of intersex categories, such as female lacking a second X chromosome, and other” (Connell 29). The physical differences between male and female keep on changing from childhood to adulthood. These differences naturally provide the base for gender.

Gender difference vividly raises the issues of male and female to the level of the masculine and the feminine. Unlike a person’s identification as male or female, gender is directly not determined by anatomy. Gender is a social construction which is a matter of the social relations within individuals. So, gender is not fixed or biological but it is social process of construction.

So, gender is socially constructed to divide men and women in two, in simple term ‘gender’ is a socio-cultural term referring socially defined roles and behaviors assigned to males and females by society. According to Connell, the term ‘gender’ is used to describe the differences in traits and behaviors between men and women.

We cannot think of womanhood or manhood as fixed by nature. But neither should we think of them as simply imposed from outside, by social norms or pressure from authorities. People construct themselves as masculine or feminine. We claim a place in the gender order – or respond to the place we have been given – by the way we conduct ourselves in everyday life. (Connell 4)

According to American philosopher and gender theorist Judith Butler, gender is introduced the notions of performance of gender. She explores the idea of gender identity as a social performance. So, gendered categories of masculine and feminine are socially set by birth.

“To what extent,” she asks, “Do regulatory practices of gender formation and division constitute identity, the internal coherence of the subject, indeed, the self-identical status of the person?” (Butler 16)

These performances become involuntary as gender gets internalized through the socialization process within the dominant discourses of patriarchy. Gender is not only social constructions, but it also incorporates historical, political and social dimensions of gender relations. Since the late 1980s, theories of gender have redefined about culture and society at every level of the social structure. According to the Kinsey Institute, American psychologist June M. Reinisch explains in *The Kinsey Institute New Report on Sex* (1991) that:

A person's enactment of gender *role* includes everything he or she says or does which suggests to others that he or she is a male or a female. This includes outwards expression of what society expects as maleness or femaleness of clothing, hair styles, interests, careers, and so forth. (Reinisch 242)

Gender is the social fact which discusses differences between masculine and feminine roles. So, masculine traits are dominant, rational, aggressive, and individualistic. Feminine traits are submissive, emotional, passive, and nurturing. Both indicate that they are different. Even if, both are different, they are cultural constructions, internalized and passed from generation to generation through gender socialization. These differential perspectives on gender contribute the reproduction of gender inequalities.

In talking about 'gender' we are not talking about simple differences or fixed categories. We are talking about relationships, boundaries, practices, identities and images that are actively created in social processes, come into existence in specific historical circumstances, shape the lives of people in profound and often contradictory ways, and are subject to historical struggle and change. (Connell 27)

Patriarchy is a source of gender inequality. According to feminist writer Cynthia H. Enloe, she describes the term patriarchy is:

The structural and ideological system that perpetuates the privileging of masculinity ... legislation, political parties, museums, newspaper, theater companies, television networks, religious organization, corporations, and courts ... derive from the presentation that what is masculine is most deserving of reward, promotion, admiration, [and] emulation. (Enloe 4)

Thus, patriarchy is the rule of the father in the family. And, they rule over women and younger one and socially subordinated males. In *Sexual Politics* (1970), Kate Millett states that:

Patriarchy's chief institution is the family. It is both the mirror of and a connection with the larger society. The chief contribution of the family is the socialization of the young into patriarchal ideology's prescribed attitudes towards the categories of the role temperament and status. (Millett 35)

Literally, patriarchy means rule by the male leader of a social unit. The nineteenth century philosopher John Stuart Mill, his famous essay entitled *The Subjection of Women* (1869) assumes that men's dominance in society was an expression of greater physical strength. Since the early twentieth century, feminist writers have used the term 'patriarchy' as a concept to refer to the social system of masculine domination over women.

Patriarchy has long been legitimated by belief systems which picture gender as a timeless, unchanging division – whether laid down by God or fixed by the genes – which makes 'women's place' the right place for ever and ever. (Connell 73)

In a patriarchal system, cultural values, norms and symbols operate to create ideologies that devalue and marginalize women, defined as feminine. These ideologies are used to deny women's equal participation in institutions of social structure such as family, education, economics and politics. They are created by power of male.

Patriarchy is responsible for women's subjugated position. Men always try to over power women and give them subordinate position. So, women are passive victims of male power and domination.

Women struggled against suppressions and oppressions, given by male-dominated society. Women never get equal opportunity as men that is why the issues of gender and feminism come together. Even if feminist movement originated in the Western societies, the ideal of feminism has been developed in Eastern countries also.

Although Eastern societies are different in the terms of location, history, and culture, women in those societies had suffered from male power.

In colonized and non-Western cultures, the form of feminist theorizing has come to support the Western notions of women's oppression and suppression. They tend to construct a 'Third world' or an 'Orient' in which gender expression is the symbol of barbarism and uncivilization. In Eastern societies, women and men also are categorized to distinctive psychological and behavioral aspects along with their social practices. Geographically Eastern societies mean all East countries of Europe. As a result, both India and Thailand is a part of Eastern world.

In Eastern world, there are several ancient cultures and traditions. Every country in Eastern world has varied and complex identities in which their society has assigned to their people. Moreover, Eastern cultural and social norms have developed from time to time. As a part of Eastern country, India and Thailand have presented the vivid differences between the two groups as male and female with their attributes and behaviors. Each culture has a way to express for men and women. So, the notion of gender is in every culture and every country be it India or Thailand.

India is one of the countries of South Asia. India's social structure is influenced by a blend of diverse religions, cultures and racial groups. These diversities have seen very broadly in the pattern of social and cultural behaviors and practices.

Particularly Indian tradition is originally defined by social hierarchy, known as Indian caste system. The caste system is one expression of social stratification. This social stratification is archaic Indian system that refers to social restrictions on Indian people. Social stratification implies inequality in power, status, and wealth. Every individual is looked on as a member of a group. And, every group has its own position in the social hierarchy. It means that no person do what a person below his rank is expected to do because the occupation is associated with birth.

In addition to the discrimination on the basis of caste, India has a patriarchal society. It is clear that both systems rigidly lead to gender discrimination. This is a reason why gender inequality has seen in every domain of Indian society in many

ways through many forms. Due to gender inequality, women suffered a lot in Indian society. Patriarchal norms of male-dominant society have relegated women to secondary status within the domains of house and workplace. These practices also have resulted in the wide gap between the position of men and women in Indian society. As social anthropologist Maitreyi Mukhopadhaya mentions in *Indian Women: Change and Challenge in the International Decade 1975-85* that:

It should be emphasized that the poor status of women, their oppression and exploitation, cannot be examined as an isolated problem in Indian society. Although the status of women constitutes a problem in most societies in the rigidly hierarchal and inequalitable social structure which exists in India, the relative inferiority and superiority of various roles is much more clearly defined. The inequality and subordination of woman is an instrument or function of the social structure. (Mukhopadhaya 82)

Like India, gender relations began to reflect the position of Thai women within Thai society as the legal property of men. Thai people preserve their tradition along with development of country. Geographically Thailand is one of Southeast Asian country which is located on Indochina peninsula. Gender perspective has influenced Thai literary works and novel is one of genre which can be called the mirror of society. Especially the women's issues find more powerful means of expression in literature. The various kinds of women's problem have been represented in literary works.

Gender is practically performed at different levels within every domain in the society. In the society, women are victimized by men. In the family, women have got inferior status and they are dependent. In the novels, femininity is linked to sweetness and strong-mindedness. Novels written by women show some women are aware of their own inferior status, but they are trying to improve their own status. Some women are proud of themselves and refuse to be treated as inferior or be victimized any longer. And, some women have written about real problems faced by women.

Literary historian Susan Koppelman Cornillon (1973) says that there are connections between feminism and literature because literature has been one of the few vocations open to women. They can:

...express the states of their minds: their perceptions about the social attitudes of men towards women, their understanding of the way in which women learn to be women and their attitudes towards each other. (Cornillon 253)

Similarly, the Algerian/French feminist writer and philosopher Hélène Cixous gives the concept of women's writing, known as *L'écriture Feminine* (Ecriture Feminine) in her essay, *The Laugh of the Medusa* (1975). She draws a parallel between the repression of women's bodies and desires and the repression of women's language. From the words of Cixous in *The Routledge Language and Cultural Theory Reader* (2000), "Write your self. Your body must be heard. Only then will the immense resources of the unconscious spring forth" (Cixous 165). She describes about deconstruction that shows femininity as lack, negativity, absence of meaning, irrationality, chaos, darkness. Woman becomes a non-being. Hence, she says that women must write the body including the mind.

I write woman: woman must write woman. And man, man. So, only an oblige consideration will be find here of man; it's up to him to say where his masculinity and femininity are at. (Cixous 162)

In the literature of the Western canon, the concept of gender also had appeared in feminist writing. The director of the Center for Women's Development Studies Mary E. John, mentions that "feminism as a literary discipline in the 60s and 70s was a narrative about the reconstruction of female experience and the 'discovery of representation' " (John 19). It became popular in the early 1970. This movement is significant in terms of women's upliftment.

Elaine Showalter, who is American literary critic and feminist, described the change in the late 1970s as a shift of attention from 'androtexs' (books by men) to 'gynotexs' (books by woman). She has coined the term 'gynocritic' meaning the study of gynotexs. She says that the subjects of gynocriticism are the history, styles, themes, genres, and structures of writing by women. Elaine Showalter is one of the famous feminists who have concentrated on the woman as writer, called gynocritic in her work *A Literature of Their Own* (1977). She promotes women's writing as representation of the experience of women. As Jonathan Culler mentions about Showalter's gynocriticism in *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction* that:

This progressive literary theory focuses on the history, themes, genres and structures of literature by women, seeking to create a method of analyzing literature written by women and to develop models of interpretation based on female experience, rather than adapting male interpretive theories and models. (Culler 140)

Gynocriticism concerns itself with feminine issues. Such issues are the world of domesticity, the experience of gestation and nurturing, and mother-daughter and woman-woman relation. There is a distinctive feminine mode of experience or subjectivity in thinking, feeling, and valuing oneself by the traits of woman's language as psychodynamic of female creativity. As a result, this style of speech and writing has given the distinctive relations between the elements of a discourse and characteristic figures as well as female literary tradition.

Since the 1980s, a number of feminist critics have used the poststructuralist positions and techniques to challenge the presumptions regarding woman as a category. They pointed out the existence of different conceptions of woman as the diversities of female identities such as race, class, nationality, and historical situation. As a female writer who has raised her voice about women's problems in her works, Kamala Markandaya is the best-known and more prolific Indian woman novelist writing in English. K. Surangkanang has presented the silenced voices of the marginalized women in Thai society. The novels of these two female novelists are gadgets to drive home the reality of women's experiences on gender. They also have been self-consciously engaged with the different women's issues.

Many novelists migrated from their home land. They have not only talked about women in native country but they also describe the live of Western women and their position. They also discusses opposite terms like East-West, traditional-modern, politics, educational reform, culture, and behavior. West is represented as active, advanced, and looking forward whereas East as old, backward, and passive. Western and Eastern people are influenced by each other. Eastern people, who want to be modern are impressed by Western thought and culture. So, they started imitating Western culture but after sometimes they started facing the problems of self-alienation and oppression in colonized consciousness. These problems are a part orientalism.

Edward Said takes up the issue related to East and West in *Orientalism* (1978). The category of the 'Orient' served as a representational tool for Europeans to bring the "unknown" under control in the era of colonial expansion. The category of Asia or east of Europe is a part of Orientalist discourse aspect of European imperialism. The region was so different. However, Asian women are in this way doubly submissive/subaltern to use Spivak's term: first as a woman and second as an Asian. Asian women faced much more obstacles. The feminine characteristics of being an Asian woman pose a problem within the feminist discourse itself. The traditional feminist consciousness has focused on the notions of oppression, subversion, and revolutionary change.

In Thai tradition and culture, there are various gender dimensions. The notion of practical and moral indebtedness *bunghun* (obligation) is one of them. The obligation for both sons and daughters is a very rigid and strong in Thai society. Mostly sons and daughters have to fulfill their duties through different methods but a parent's expectations for their daughters are much higher than for their sons. For example, a son will most likely enter monkhood and gain merit for their parents but a daughter must fulfill *bunghun* through economic means. At a young age, the adolescent girls are given much more responsibility, while the boys are allowed much freedom and given few responsibilities. Likewise, Mae Peu-ut and Nai Klin has *bunghun* for Reun and Eet. Reun always give more respect to them because they always look after her child, even if they are not her family members. The title before name in Thai distinguishes paternal and maternal relatives such as *Mae* for a woman and *Nai* for a man.

Another gender practice affecting women adversely is the marginalization of women who cannot give birth to a son. They always suffer with the social norms where male baby is always preferable than female. This social practice is seen in *Nectar in a Sieve*. Kamala Markandaya has portrayed that Rukmani's first child is female. She has depicted this social custom in Indian society. Rukmani's first child female is Irawaddy. After that she could not conceive for seven years. Her husband wants a son to continue his rural work. Then, she goes to meet Dr. Kenny for

treatment. Then, she becomes the mother of six sons: Arjun, Thambi, Murugan, Raja, Selvam, and Kuti.

This novel exposes the traditional attitude of Indians on the birth of female child. A child is the gift of God, but Indians prefer a boy to a girl. They believe that son look after the parents in future while girl child is married to a man. Hindu women do not get share in the family's agricultural land. After the death of the father, his property was divided equally only among his sons.

In Indian society, women have been considered a liability. The parents of female child must pay a dowry to a man who marries her. The family of the husband can be demanding on her. In India and Thailand, the practice of dowry is very old. The dowry has become a big problem in the life of each family. And, the bride is reduced to an object of negative commercial value. So, the dowry price may be more than the bride's parents are able to pay immediately.

The husband of new bride can extort her and make new demands from her family. German socialist feminist Maria Mies (1986) suggests that the global economy has developed through a dual process of 'colonization' and 'housewifization'. Women in the colonized world are formerly full participants in local non-capitalist economies. They have been increasingly pressed into the housewife pattern of social isolation and dependence on a male breadwinner.

In the natural life cycle of human, marriage and family is very important for women. Family of a bride can complain and even husband can remarry if bride could not give male heir. As in *Nectar in a Sieve*, Irawaddy is first female child of Rukmani and Nathan. She can be called the eldest daughter of them. She was born a beautiful baby. "She was a fair child, lovely and dimpled with soft gleaming hair" (NS 17). Later, her parents fix her marriage but Irawaddy suffers due to bad fate when her husband sent her back to Rukmani because after five years of marriage she could not able to produce any child. Rukmani's son-in-law says that:

Mother-in-law...I intend no discourtesy, but this is no ordinary visit. You give me your daughter in marriage. I have brought her back to you. She is a barren woman. (NS 52)

Both Rukmani and Nathan do not protest against the behavior of Irawaddy's husband. "I do not blame him... He justified, for a man needs children. He has been patient" (NS 52). Having same attitude, Nathan also supports his son-in-law. As sacrificing woman for her husband, Rukmani do not protest the actions of her husband and her son-in-law. "For men to have an identity and to have power, the mother must be subordinated and anything associated with her must be depicted as evil" (Ryan 132).

However, she accepts her daughter's fate but she never loses her hope. She takes her daughter to Dr. Kenny for healing barrenness. After healing, Rukmani tries to send Irawaddy back to her husband, but he refuses.

I would' he replied, with a hint of sorrow in his eyes, 'for she was a good wife to me, and a comely one, but I have waited long and now I have taken another woman'...Ira was waiting, eagerness shining from her. (NS 63)

When she came to know his answer, "she said not a word... she only looked at me with stony eyes" (NS 63). In India, marriage becomes mental misery for the family which has a girl child. Kamala Markandaya has portrayed her as a victim of fate. In *Nectar in a Sieve*, not only husband of Irawaddy deserted her but Khuthi also is abandoned by her husband and Murugan leaves Ammu.

At first, Irawaddy fails to give a child so she fails in the role of mother. She recognizes that "women...and I a failure, a woman who cannot even bear a child" (NS 52). Although Irawaddy is a young girl, she is a surrogate mother to her youngest brother Kuti. She sells her body to men in the tannery. And, she feeds her brother who was dying of starvation with food earned from prostitution. This shows that a girl may be not perfect biologically, but she always has maternal instinct with moral values. Deepty Pandey holds that "like other instincts as love, anger, jealousy and sex, The Maternal is also unquestionably an instinct. It is generally found in all women" (Pandey 24).

Feminist sociologist and psychoanalyst Nancy Chorodow points out the gender difference in rearing children in *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and*

the Sociology of Gender (1978). Chorodow mentions that the paths of development for girls and boys create different emotional situations in early childhood. Girls, who brought up by a parent of their own, tend to have less distinct ego boundaries. When they grow up, they have a stronger motivation for nurturing children. Differently, boys separated from a mother, responding to the gender distinction. They tend to break in the development that men can 'mother.' They have more difficulty in establishing gender identity like mother but they have the stronger boundaries to the self in adulthood.

According to Bulgarian-French philosopher, feminist, and novelist Julia Kristeva, the construction of the woman's social identity is formed in terms of femininity as marginality. The woman's identity is defined from the patriarchal point of view. She emphasizes on marginality to allow the repression of the feminine as a 'position' and not an 'essence.' Kristeva mentions that women cannot be represented unless they speak and are condemned to remain outside naming and ideologies. The notion of marginality refers to the repression of the women in terms of their place in society. It is simply that femininity is marginalized the patriarchal symbolic order. Patriarchy is a code that oppresses women. Likewise, Toril Moi shows this shift t:

If patriarchy sees women as occupying a marginal position, within the symbolic order, then it can construe them as the *limit* or order-line of that order that. From a phallogocentric point of view, women will then come to represent the necessary frontier between man and chaos, but because of their very marginality they will also always seem to recede into and merge with the chaos of the outside. Women seen as the limit of the symbolic order will in other words share in the deconstructing properties of *all* frontiers. (Moi 167)

This is the reason that Rukmani exclaims with tears of disappointment. "A girl's body – what woman wants girl for her first born?" (NS 19). She supports her husband's view that a male child is an asset while a girl child is a liability to the family. However, Kamala Markandaya has given an ironic turn to the preference for a son in this novel. Rukmani's sons do not take interest in the land of father Nathan. As Arjun and Thambi join the tannery and go to work as the labor of tea plantation in Ceylon. And, Murugan also leaves for the city and Selvam run away from land. This

view shows the contrast on the notion of social expectation on heir as well as male that the male child do not look after the land after his father anymore.

The major reason for this gender inequality is identified as the need of a male heir for taking care and continued financial support to the family, after getting the huge dowry. Rukmani recalls her past about the marriage of her three sisters. All of them have to marry with the man who is proper for them, depending on social status such as family and financial relations.

My three sisters were married long before I was. Shanta first, a big wedding which lasted for many days, plenty of gifts and feasts, diamond earrings, a gold necklace, as befitted the daughter of the village headman. Padmini next, and she too made a good match and was married fittingly taking jewels and dowry with her; but when it came to Thangam, only relations from our own village came to the wedding and not from the surrounding districts as they had done before, and only jewel she had was diamond nose-screw. (NS 3)

The trend of dowry in India is presented by Kamala Markandaya. And, when Rukmani's marriage is arranged, it is a more difficult than that of her other three sisters. Her father did not have much to give as dowry. She says that:

By the time, I came to womanhood, even I had to acknowledge his (her father's) prestige was much diminished. Perhaps that was why they could not find me a rich husband, and married me to a tenant farmer who was poor in everything but in love and care for me, his wife, whom he took at the age of twelve. (NS 4)

And, In Indian tradition, the male child extorts dowry and continues the name of the family while all the money spent on a girl's education is considered a waste because when the girl will earn, it would go to the husband's family. So, giving birth to a girl means the parents will have to buy a groom for her when the time comes.

Like Indian tradition, most of Thai people prefer the son to daughter. John R. Warner, mentions 'son preference' in his essay "The Silence of Women, The Voices of Women" that:

In 1992 China held a demographic seminar to discuss the 1990 census...in China and in other Asian countries more females should

have been born. Many girls were missing. The explanation given is known as 'son preference.' (Warner 15)

As a social practice, the son preference can be found in Asian societies including Thai. The matter of son preference is a very old tradition. It is to imply that women are considered to have less value than men. In Thailand, when a male baby is born, a slate and a pencil is placed beside him. If a baby is female, a needle and thread is placed there. In the other word, the parents expect him to become a man of knowledge and her to be a good housewife. When a child grows up, a boy is sent to study at a temple but a girl always stays at home to learn to do all household work. So the important ability of cooking for a woman means that she will charm her husband by her culinary art. This is the duty of a wife.

In other words, the parents take better care of a son than a daughter. The son will receive more and better food, better medical care, and a better education in male dominant societies. And a man is allowed to help support the family while the role of woman is restricted at home. The concept of ideal Indian womanhood in terms of their traditional roles in the family also can be seen in the other Kamala Markandaya's women as Rukmani, Sarojini, and Premala:

There is tradition. Perhaps not only in India, that women should not be worried, that the best way to ensure this is to keep them as far as possible in ignorance... Certain domains belong to men alone, and Indian women learn early not to encroach. (*SIF* 87)

As one of women's roles, the role of wife is very important in the woman's life after marriage. A majority of Indians have their traditional marriages, arranged by their parents or other family members. Many women in India marry before reaching 18 years old. Therefore, child marriages are common in India. *Nectar in a Sieve*, the first novel of Kamala Markandaya has presented the picture of early marriage through female characters such as Rukmani, Irawaddy, Khuthi, Kali, Janaki.

As a female protagonist, Rukmani gets married at the age of twelve. Rukmani is the youngest of the four daughters of a village head man. She married Nathan by arrangement of her family. This novel depicts the rural life of South India in the real

conditions of peasant woman and farmers in the light of contemporary India after the independence.

Being a female protagonist, Rukmani is the stereotype of the Indian rural woman who plays role of the traditional wife in an Indian village. In the male-dominant society, a woman is supposed to be an ideal wife, a mother, and a homemaker. To Mary Ann Fergusson mentions that "...in every age woman has been seen primarily as mother, wife, Mistress, and as sex object in their roles in relationship to man" (Fergusson 4). Within a dutiful wife of Indian tradition, Rukmani is faithfully devoted to her husband. She never addresses her husband by his name. As a Hindu wife, she does not call the name of her husband.

It was my husband who woke me - my husband, whom I will call him Nathan for that was his name, although in all the years of our marriage I never called him that, for it is not meet for woman to address her husband except as "husband" (NS 9)

Kamala Markandaya has presented Rukmani's self-sacrificing attitude to her husband. Rukmani is one of daughters of the village headman. Although, she married a tenant farmer below her family status, she speaks to her husband "who was poor in everything but rich in love and care for me" (NS 8). She feels proud of him as he is efficient in farming and maintaining the household single. When she came to know the news of her husband relation with another woman Khuthi, she did not say anything and saved his honor.

And so I laid my face on his face and for a while his breath fell soft and light as a rose petal on my cheek, then he sighed as if in weariness and turned his face to me, and so his gentle spirit withdrew and the light went out in his eyes. (NS 191)

According to Amar Nath Prasad, he praises Rukmani as "a woman's place is with her husband. For, a wife is the heart of the family, family is the heart of society" (Prasad 32). As an Indian wife, Rukmani is perfect wife for her husband. Dr. Kenny has a doubt and he says that " 'My God!'... 'I do not understand you. I never will. Go, before I too am entangled in your philosophies' " (NS 116). Similarly, Sarojini also has been portrayed in *A Silence of Desire*. Sarojini's characteristics are:

... a good wife, good with children, an excellent cook, an efficient manager of his household, a woman who still gave him pleasure after fifteen years of marriage, less from the warmth of her response than from her unfailing acquiescence to his demands. (*SD* 2)

But *Some Inner Fury* is entirely different from *Nectar in a Sieve* and *A Silence of Desire*. Through theme of arranged marriage has also appeared in *Some Inner Fury*, the relationship of Premala and Kitsamy was not good. Premala is shy, innocent, and modest woman.

... for she would have done anything for him ... Premala came to borrow my shorts, put them on, blushing: blushed again, furiously, when Kit looked at her bare legs, for she had never worn anything but a sari. But this modesty, which is supposed to grace a woman, found little favor in Kit's eyes. (*SIF* 53)

Premala fails as a traditional wife. Within her married life, she cannot adjust completely to her husband's modern life style.

To her, goodness of heart was almost the sum of perfection and little else of consequence: for there are many keys that unlock the gates of men's liking, and each is differently fashioned. (*SIF* 155)

Then, she decides to go her way. "They (Premala and Kitsamy) agreed to go their separate ways, tacitly acknowledging thus the imperfect articulation of their marriage" (*SIF* 173). Kitsamy neglects his wife Premala until Govind blames him for driving her to death.

She loved you... You never loved her - you do not even know the meaning of love. You gave her nothing not even a home. You drove her to the village-you drove her to her death. (*SIF* 240)

Kamala Markandaya has highlighted an image of Indian woman who always suffers and believes in sacrifice. Similarly, Partha Chatterjee (1989) has explained in an influential essay in which Indian nationalist movement resolved the 'woman question' in accordance with its preferred goals. In the main, this resolution was built around a separation of the domain of culture into two spheres: the material and the spiritual. In the material sphere, Britain had subjugated India and other colonies

through its superior techniques in science, technology, economic organization, statecraft and so on.

But it had failed to colonize the inner, essential identity of the East which lay in its distinctive, and superior, spiritual culture. That is where the East was undominated, sovereign, master of its own fate. (Chatterjee 121)

The duty for the family, personal fulfillment and search for an identity becomes the main themes for women's writers. Many women novelists wrote their works related to the patriarchal paradigm. Most of their works was concerned with women's search for their true identity and sexual liberation. Through the depiction of rebellious heroines, these novelists attempted to free women from conventional enslavement. The ideas of the anti-patriarchal structure of society also have been expressed in the novels. So, women have resisted the male-dominant structure because they were oppressed by the male power. And, they suffered more suppression to stand independently in the male society. Simone de Beauvoir in her book *The Second Sex* says that What is a woman? throughout history woman has been seen as the 'Other' of man.

The situation of woman is that she – a free and autonomous being like all creatures – nevertheless finds herself living in a world where men compel her to assume the status of the Other. (Beauvoir 16)

Simone de Beauvoir mentions that “one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman; it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature which is described as feminine” (Beauvoir 267). She explains that gender differences in the society make the man superior. It gives him power in family and workplace but women have got the position of Other. Therefore, gender differences set the hierarchal opposition such that men are superiors and women are subordinates. Women's position is that of the other and women are continual outsiders. As a part of women's identity, women have to play many roles in her life as wife, mother, and sister. These roles of a woman are directed toward attachment to family. She is submissive wife to husband, devoted mother to her children and manages all house work.

A girl will learn that it is not women, but men who rule the world and her self-image is constructed accordingly; she is informed she must accept a role which is represented to her as subordinate and limited. (Beauvoir 43)

No matter whether women were born in high or low class in society, they always had a lower status than men. “Thus humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him” (Beauvoir 16). As Simone de Beauvoir mentions to the Aristotle’s quotation that “the female is a female by virtue of a certain lack of qualities. We should regard the female nature as afflicted with a natural defectiveness”. Because women are inferior to men, they are always exploited by male power.

The life of Photjaman in *Ban Sai Thong* depends on the male members of her family. Her grandfather was wrongly accused by his brother and chased out of the family, losing his inheritance, the Golden Sand castle. Two generations later Photjaman has to return to Ban Sai Thong after her father’s death for seeking financial support from her relatives. In patriarchal norms, women are expected to be soft and passive to men. K. Surangkanang challenges a gender ideology through the representation of Photjaman as strong and independent. But Photjaman has to follow the patriarchal norms, defined by her parents, especially her father. Finally, she gets married with Chai Klang who is the eldest nephew of brother of her grandfather. Photjaman has to change her surname Pinitnan to Sawangwong surname of Chai Klang. Following Thai tradition and culture, after marriage Thai woman has to use her husband’s surname as well.

Ban Sai Thong has dominated the literature market of Thailand during the period of doctrial government from the late 1950s to the early 1970s. This period of Thai society has presented the interrelation between the modern environment and the issues of gender in different aspects of modern Thai identities under patriarchy. Some social practices were too strict at that time. For example, Thai women are not legally allowed to use their surname after marriage as Photjaman. They must use their husband’s surname instead. Or, at workplace women’s wages are smaller than that of men. The participation of women in politics is less than men.

The women's status in Thai society is considered less valuable. They are mostly deprived of equal culture and social norms. Since ancient times, a man is the leader of his family who takes care of his wife and his children, protects them from danger, and provides for their needs. On the other hand, a wife has to show her respect to her husband every day.

In Thai tradition, after the sun sets, wife will not go anywhere but prepare the bed for her husband. When her husband goes to bed, she *krap* (prostrate oneself) at his feet for showing her high respect. In the morning, she wakes up before him for cooking. When he takes breakfast, she generally sits beside him to see whether he wants any more. And like India even in Thai society a good wife will not eat before her husband. Generally, the duty of a wife is to manage the work in household.

In the past of patriarchal Thai society, women were considered to be the victim of traditional and cultural norms of male society. As in domestic sphere, Thai women have to do all houseworks, including cooking food, nurturing and following her husband, and looking after the children. Women have to do everything in house. This social model is a stereotype of Thai traditional women. However, in modern times, women can work outside home, but they have to do their duties at home as well. This shows the double burden on a woman's life.

In the process of change, the period of 1960s and 1970s is known as the period of development in Thailand. Women's challenge to male-dominated society grew much stronger in the 1990s. They rejected subordination to male-dominance. A series of developments had brought about changes in Thai society, including economic growth, the reduction of birth rate and the increasing number of women working outside home.

In the time of modern Thai period, K. Surangkanang has portrayed her female characters as a typical ideal woman who thinks about her own life. A contemporary Thai woman is shown in K. Surangkanang's novel *Dok Fa*. K. Surangkanang glorifies a new role of Thai woman through the character of Sangrawee. Sangrawee is portrayed as an arrogant woman similar to the meaning of the title of the novel. The Thai word '*dok fa*' refers to a woman who belongs to high-ranking class. At the same

time, Sangralee is a stereotype of modern Thai woman who protests against the social convention of patriarchal system.

Sangralee belongs to a noble woman class, who graduated from England. At the age of 25 she is married off by her parents. In Thai tradition, a woman cannot select her own spouse. Her parents would make an arranged marriage with a man who is proper in the social and financial status. Likewise, an old proverb describes a couple who suit each other as *king thong bai yok*. It means that a golden branch and a jade leaf. Regarding aspects of marriage customs, Phraya Rachawaranukun (Uam) suggests that:

When the child reaches maturity and can earn his or her own living, parents should choose a spouse for that individual. The selection is very important to both families involved. The newlywed couple should be able to raise and support their own nuclear family. Each spouse will be a new member of his or her in laws' family. If each spouse is a good person, all will prosper. If either is bad, all will suffer. (Uam 62)

Thai marriage customs involve the families of both sides, not only the two individuals who love one another. Many parents control the marriage of their offspring through Buddhist teaching and social customs. Traditionally Thai society expects their children to be grateful and obedient to their parents and behave as their parents want them to. However, Sangralee rejects this traditional condition. Alladi Uma observes that:

Subtle indoctrination atrophies a women's desire to change her position as an object and to exercise her free will; she compromises her stand, for she is taught the importance and necessity of a stable marriage and family – family as security, as a source of emotional strength. (Uma 4)

For many Thai women, marriage is not for love but a way to raise their status and to help out their family financially. In contrast, Sangralee asserts to help her father's business by herself. Today women go to work like men and some of them are promoted to the leaders of their organizations. This woman's practice implies that women can be steadfast by themselves in modern time. As Sangralee's behavior is in conflict with social attitudes because the traditional Thai woman in the past does not go to work outside in the public domain like men do. They should always be confined

in domestic work. In contrast Sangrawee, graduated from a university in the West. And, she has adopted modern attitudes. She is proud and self-glorifies herself. She thinks that she can do what men do because she is a perfect human being. And, for her, the marriage has to be comfortable to both the partners. As a woman, she should have a right to select her husband according to her own will.

In the past, marriage was supposed to give a woman status, security, and her opportunity to function as a mother and wife. In this novel, K. Surangkanang has dared to break some old traditions such as the institution of arranged marriage by allowing her female protagonist to get married without parental consent. She also blurs the line of gender by showing how a Thai woman can be like a man and yet maintain her femininity. Her model of modern Thai woman differs from the established roles.

According to Sara Fenstermaker Berk, who is the author of *The Gender Factory: The Appointment of Work in American Households*. This book is about household labor and the attitudes of married couple. It is that wives do the vast majority of household and childcare tasks. Berk contends that something more complex than rational arrangements is required for the reproduction of household goods and services.

Hardly a question simply of who has more time, or whose time is worth more, who has more skill or more power, it is clear that a complicated relationship between the structure of normative expectations attached to work as gendered determines the ultimate allocation of members' time to work and home. (Berk 195)

Berk argues that our current arrangements for the domestic division of labor support two production processes: household goods and services (cooking, child caring and child rearing) and, at the same time, gender:

Simultaneously, members 'do' gender, as they 'do' housework and child care, and what [has] been called the division of labor provides for the joint production of household labor and gender; it is the mechanism by which both the material and symbolic products of the household are realized. (Berk 201)

Therefore, Sangrawee becomes the model of the modern Thai female who agrees to go against the traditional role of the Thai woman. But she still retains traditional values of the family. Sangrawee's attitudes and practices change from ancient cultural and social norms to the modern. British feminist and writer Ann Rosamund Oakley explores the term gender in a new way in her book *Sex, Gender and Society* (1972). She says that women are given the roles of the housewife and mother in the Western culture because of their biology. The western culture also believes that any effort to change the traditional roles of men and women in the society can cause damage to the social fabric of the society. Oakley concludes this view regarding the roles of men and women helps to support and maintain the patriarchal society.

Like India, Thailand colonized relations between the rulers and the ruled. It was not in the same way as in many colonial countries of Southeast Asia. The national movement is not appeared in Thailand. Anyway Thai society is under political and economic pressures and forces to acquaint with Western thought and culture. Amidst the rapid growth of development, Thailand has many forms of inequality in such field as social, economic, political. Gender inequality in Thailand remains in every level of social structure. Particularly women have been burdened with cultural and traditional obligations by their parents and social changes.

Historically, during the era of Ayutthaya Kingdom (1350-1767) under *Sakdina* system, every freeman had to be a servant with the lords. *Sakdina* system (feudal system) is the system of production in the society that succeeded the *That* system (slave system). Thai people were classified by their birth and their functions in society. Except for the king, every Thai from a prince to slave was conferred the marks to rank his status in the society. Higher marks signified higher status, power, authority, and responsibility. In aspects of gender, men were for economic and political activities while women were left behind to take care of their family. Women are victims of the *Sakdina* system and patriarchal structures.

Thai society has also been dominated by the males. Thai tradition and culture has given the fathers and husbands authority over family members. Observing the ancient Thai laws, similar to the laws of other patriarchal societies were based on the

concept of the rights of the father and husband over their children and wives. This perspective implies the inequality which treats women as buffaloes and men as human beings. In the reign of King Mongkut (1851-1868), there was a huge change. The abolishment of social practice of husband selling their wives was over. In Thai literature, this perspective serves the *Sakdina* system which treats women as sex object. It can be seen in *Nang That*, a novel by Wannasiri. The Thai words *Nang That* means a “slave girl.”

Later in the reign of King Vajiravudh (1910-1925), Thai women’s status was improved in which they obtained access to formal education. However, some gendered role of women remains in the present time. The emphasis given to the magazine *Kunlasatri* written by a woman under the pseudonym Sangwanphet has been reflected in an article entitled “A Woman’s Duty”. She mentions the characterization of gender roles:

Men are the ones who find the means to support a family. In this they are similar to the male bird that brings food to the nest. The female bird, on the other hand, tends the nest and looks after the young. Consequently it is the duty of a woman to look after the home while a man has the responsibility of providing the sustenance. Since ancient times and almost everywhere in the world it has been customary for men to live and sleep in the home while the duty of women has been to maintain it. However, if a woman is ignorant and lacks the appropriate knowledge to carry out this important task, how can a man go on and have the energy and confidence to do his duty? (Sangwanphet 12)

Sangwanphet argues that education of woman is essential. Likewise, girls should begin their education by studying the same as boys. They should be taught about the law related to women, individual rights, obligations, and power relations. Moreover, girls should also be trained in the social skills.

For long time, the traditional metaphor in the past was that “A man is like the front legs of an elephant while a woman is like its hind legs” (*Kunlasatri* 13). The traditional Thai woman refers ‘rear legs’ of an elephant and her husband provides the ‘front legs.’ It evokes images of battle elephants in wartime of the recent time and the secondary position of Thai women. When the front legs moves forward the hind legs

must follow. Both of them should be in step. If one takes a false step, both will suffer. This supports the idea of the subordination of women. However, Sangwanphet also argues that a man's success in the public domain is dependent on his wife's support in the private sphere of the home.

In *Rachawadee Seemuang* by K. Surangkanang, Nisakorn, the female protagonist is a middle-class woman who married at the age of 19. This novel exposes the problems between husband-wife under the influence of modern Thai society. Before marriage, Nisakorn is a working woman. Because of Thai tradition, after marriage any wife should restrict their lives to the domestic role and duty for her husband and her child. Women are forced to live in confined inferior spaces. To Thak Chaloemtiarana says that:

Women are expected to act like songbirds in a gilded cage and never escape into the wider world to enjoy themselves. But most women end up sacrificing their bodies out of duty to their husbands, which is no different than being raped. (Chaloemtiarana 155)

After marriage, a husband is supposed to provide his wife a nice house, food, money, and clothing. The wife must continue to support the parents and siblings until the rest of the children are married:

Can we regard husbands as a 'power'? It flies in the face of conventional political analysis, but it makes sense. In a patriarchal gender order, husbands' interests in their wives' sexual and domestic services are institutionalized on a society-wide basis. (Connell 104)

In Thai literary canon, there are many literary works that relate to the duties of Thai women when they become the role of wife. As in a mid-nineteenth century, *Suphasit Son Ying* (Exhortation to Women) is a notable manual authored by Sunthon Phu. Sunthon Phu, who is Thailand's best-known royal poet, has described the duties of a good wife in his literary work that:

It is natural for a man and a woman to love each other; however, a woman should not openly express her emotion. Take a tree for an example. Even though it is blown by a storm and its branches are swaying, it still stands firm and does not move. Similarly, a woman

should be reserved and not be moved by the sweet talk of men. She should keep her honor like a yak which keeps its hair all clean.

Do not believe match-makers; they all want money or a reward from men. If a man really loves you, he will ask your parents for your hand. Do not simply follow him home, or you will be abandoned soon. (Sunthon Phu 93)

Sunthon Phu has written this book as a guideline for all Thai women following Thai tradition and culture. This book illustrates the moral conduct in the form of advice for women. Chris Baker and Pasuk Phongpaichit suggest that *Suphasit Son Ying*:

[T]aught wives how to minister submissively to their husbands. It recognized the more upper-class women wanted a say in selecting a husband, and advise them how to choose wisely. It instructed them in how to contribute to the family business activity, which was increasingly important for women of this class. (Baker and Phongpaichit 44)

Thai women have been taught to be traditional. K. Surangkanang has pointed out that woman suffers in the domestic role as wife of her husband and mother of her child. Through Nisakorn in *Rachawadee Seemuang*, she has portrayed a modernized self-confident working woman. She gets married at the age of 19 with Weerawut. Before marriage, Nisakorn was a working woman as a new role of Thai woman in modern time but after marriage she had to leave her job because she wanted to be a good wife for her husband.

The debates in Thai magazine named *Satri Thai* relate to the formation of the identity of Thai women as they interweave the traditional practices and beliefs with the modern, discussing to accept or reject. In fact, as in Indian traditional society, Thai women are also pushed under the total control of their husbands in the domain of family. Through *Rachawadee Seemuang*, K. Surangkanang has presented the issue of marriage life. Rousseau (1762) states the constitution of good woman:

The whole education of women ought to be relative to men. To please them, to be useful to them, to make themselves loved and honored by them, to educate them when young, to care for them when grown, to counsel them, to make life sweet and agreeable to them – these are the

duties of women at all times, and what should be taught them from their infancy. (Bell and Offen 49)

It is a way to imply that women though educated are subjugated under patriarchy. This socialization leads women into their subordinate situation. *Rachawadee Seemuang* has presented the conflict between the husband-wife relationships for reflecting social life. Likewise, Kamala Markandaya has shown problems of married life through a middle-class Indian married couple Sarojini and Dandekar in *A Silence of Desire*. This novel explores the theme of conflict between traditionalism and modernism, faith and reason, science and superstition.

Sarojini is shocked at her husband's spying on her and when he calls her a soiled woman. Her sense of righteousness arises, she states that "the man whom I worship as a God; she said, look at him directly. You are very nearly right in that one thing. Just that one thing" (*SD* 72). Sarojini thinks that she is right and has done nothing wrong that makes chastity unchaste. After her husband knows everything about her healing. She replies him that:

Because you would have stopped me going to be healed ... You would not have let me be-no! You would have reasoned with me until I lost my faith, because faith and reason did not go together and without faith ... I shall not be healed. (*SD* 87)

Like Rukmani and Mirabai, Sarojini is too strong and wise in her acceptance. At last, Sarojini decides to entrust her life to medicine and successfully undergoes an operation. She is free from the power of Swamy. Unlike *Rachawadee Seemuang*, *A Silence of Desire* has shown more 'silence of speech' than 'silence of desire' by Sarojini as woman's voice. In her marriage life, both Sarojini and Dandekar lack mutual understanding and they almost do not speak. N. Ramachandran Nair observes that:

Kamala Markandaya seems to stress the point that there are times at which one has to keep silence and times at which one has to speak. Indiscretion in this regard may be detrimental to the preservation of joy and peace. Dandekar and Sarojini are victims of such an impress. The root causes of their prolonged uneasiness are their inability to speak out. (Nair 238)

The clash of spirituality and modernity takes place between old faith and new views. Modernity has brought in modern habits, manners, ideas of the social trend and gives the views of both positive and negative development. Her female characters are the victims of changing India. In 1947, India gained its independence from Britain. The struggle to end the colonial empires necessarily challenged the gender arrangements of colonial society. Some nationalist, revolutionary and anti-colonial movement mobilized women's support and contested traditional forms of patriarchy. As a part of this process, women are suffering from political, social, economical and individual problems even after the achievement of independence and different types of changes. Women have been assigned to the domestic realm for reproduction and housework as private world, and men to the public domain of economics and politics. The concept of separate spheres has divided people in society into two categories as men and women. The public-private dichotomy relates to the gender division.

The position of upper caste widows under the patriarchal system was pitiable. Because of the death of her husband, she is looked as an evil. So, as a single mother she has to rear the child without a male partner. The life of widow was very difficult and it is presented through Rukmani in the last part of the novel. Rukmani has lost her husband. She says,

Sometimes at night I think that my husband is with me again, coming gently through the mists, and we are tranquil together. Then morning comes, the wavering grey turns to gold, there is a stirring within as the sleepers awake and he softly departs. (NS 3)

There is no uniform movement for reform of gender practices, but in different issues at different times in different parts of India. The main issues included sati (widow burning), female infanticide, child marriage, *purdah* (female seclusion) and restrictions on female education. Within an ancient Indian tradition, the practice of *suttee* or *sati* protects the honor of women. The widow was consumed by the flames of death for her deceased husband's funeral pyre. This practice was glorified by the death of the mythological Hindu deity Sati, who preferred to set herself on fire rather than suffer any indignity towards her husband, Mahadeva. As in the past, local culture magnifies and glorifies the Sati Mata. Sati Mata is a woman who followed tradition of Sati. The trend of new women complains this sacrificial role. In Kamala

Markandaya's novels, the wife in the role of *Sati-Savitri* pattern is portrayed in Rukmani. Rukmani never loses faith in life and love for her husband and children.

The story of Savitri is held up as a prime example of the lengths to which a wife should go in adding her husband. The good wife saves her husband from death, follows him anywhere, proves her virtue, remains under his control and gives him her power. (Wadley 122)

In Thai tradition and culture, there is no practice of *suttee* or *sati*. If any husband dies, his wife will remain a widow to live in her way. In some cases, such widows can get married again, but this is morally not accepted by society. Polygamy was another big problem, faced by Thai.

According to Oxford Dictionary, the term 'polygamy' means the practice or custom of having more than one wife or husband at the same time. In the ancient Thai society, the polygamy was an essential feature of Thai culture. Polygamy has long been socially practiced in Thai society. In patriarchal system, men can take one major and more minor wives.

Polygamy and the social practice up to and including the present day of Thai men taking mistress (*nang bamroe*) or minor wives (*mia noi*) are the institutions that help account for the easy way Thai female sexuality has been commoditized. (Reynolds 131)

Malee Pruekpongsawalee observes the recognition of polygamy. There were four different types of wives. The first type is the 'royal wife' who is a wife received as a reward from the king or a royal wedding as their family were closely related to the king. Secondly, *Mia Klang Muang* is the major wife whom the man's parents arranged for him. The third type is *Mia Klang Nok* the minor wife whom the man chooses for himself. The last is *Mia That* or the slave wife who is bought from her former master by the present master. Moreover, each type can be more than one wife, except the royal wife.

Women resisted monogamous marriage while polygamy was an essential attribute of Thai men. If any man has many wives, he is so proud himself. It means that he can financially afford many wives and a large number of children. This brings him more power to impress others in the society. This will enhance his prestige in the

public domain as in workplace. On the other hand, a wife always suffers a lot when her husband has more than one wife at the same time.

A modern wife claims equal status with men and liberates herself from her husband's control. There has been no public defense of polygamy. Chaophraya Thiphakorawong was the only nobleman who publicly defended this social practice in that time. He admits that Buddhism does not approve of polygamy and that those who had many wives were not practicing the Buddhist middle way. However, Buddhism does not absolutely forbid the followers from having more than one wife. In his opinion, he describes the fact that:

A husband had more than one wife could benefit the woman too; because if the woman was not well or pregnant, the husband could be attended to by his other wives and would not bother the woman. (Thiphakorawong 225)

In Thai tradition and culture, there is inequality in the rights of men and women. Monogamy and fidelity are expected of a woman while men have freedom to have sex outside marriage in many forms, prostitution or extra-marital affairs. Women do not want to take many husbands like a man have many wives, but a wife wants her husband to love her only. In fact, women of all classes, from high-class towards the lower class have suffered this male injustice equally. Although religions consider this social practice as immoral or sinful, women are punished for transgression but not men. Any men can take many wives while the woman is only allowed one man as her husband. If any woman has relation with man more than one, she is condemned morally by society as an immoral woman as female protagonist Wanthong in *Khunchang Khunphaen*.

Wanthong is well-known traditional literary Thai model, who is condemned as an immoral woman. The impact of social pressure affects a woman like Wanthong because she is unable to make a quick choice between two husbands striving to possess her. Her first love is on one side. And, another is her later indulgent and loyal protector. Therefore, being a woman desired by two competing husbands, Wanthong is condemned. Ironically, her first husband, who is the male protagonist, has three other wives. She is punished by the king because she is a lustful woman who has

caused a long conflict between two noblemen. The king gives her a death sentence. As Duangmon Chitchamnong (1979) mentions that:

Although even the narrator points out that her sentence is unfair owing to the king's ignorance about human nature and the lack of sensitivity and sympathy, uncritical audiences traditionally consider her an example of an 'immoral woman.' (Chitchamnong 28)

Wanthong is under strict social conventions. She has no choice to make and no right to decide for herself. This leads to a tragic end. Hence, Wanthong is considered purely a social victim, who is only an object in a male-dominated society. In Thai phrases, the manner of men about having many wives is *mee mia noi* (having polygamist) while for women the words are *mee shu* (infidelity). Therefore, *mee mia noi* and *mee shu* practically imply to the adultery but *mee shu* literally has bad connotation. K. Surangkanang also has depicted women as victims of male society and criticizes patriarchal structures for oppressing women.

From time to time, the social practice of polygamy looks upon woman as a commodity. Extra-marital affair and polygamy are the problem faced by women. Society has expected women to tolerate these behaviors of their husbands. In Thai society, in 1861, an edict promulgated stipulated that men had right to have several wives. In the modern period, in the 1920s many journalists and novelists were exploring and criticized in the upper-class polygamy.

Historically polygyny performed political work that spilled over the boundaries of its definition as a mere marital category. It functioned to integrate geographically disparate settlements into the kingdom, to provide the monarch with numerous male relatives to govern the kingdom, and to construct Siam's masculine political culture. (Loos 110)

The monogamous marriage law was always deferred until after the Revolution 1932 that overthrew absolute monarchy. Through the change of the civil law in 1932, the government amended the law to allow a man to have only on a lawful wife. As a result, the status of minor wives is not accepted by society. Today, in Thailand polygamy is not acceptable as a legal rights and social practice. And, in Thai Civil and Commercial Code, the law permits the man to officially register one marriage

only but the law does not forbid him from entering unto unregistered marriages with other women. Likewise, Malee Pruekpongsawalee has translated King Rama VI's quote about polygamy in the book *Women's Studies in Asia Series: Thailand*. King Rama VI comments on his draft of the new Husband and Wife Law dated on June 5, 1913 that:

I disagree with the conclusion that if we allow polygamy in our law, it will demonstrate that we are less civilized than the Europeans. The European law that imposes on a man to have just one wife is related to their religion that requires monogamy from both male and female. Any married persons having extra-marital relationships are considered as committed adultery. But there is no limit in our religion to men having many wives ... our religion does not prohibit having many wives ... but if a man commits adultery with another man's wife or if a married woman, either a major or minor wife, has a love affair with any other man it will be considered as committing adultery. (King Rama VI 130)

Major and minor wives in Buddhism are considered as women forbidden to others. In Thai tradition, the first wife is considered to be more legitimate while the other women are imaged as bad women who do not respect the traditional norms and social rules. These bad women have to get the punishment by society as social outcasting or death. However, the status of minor wives is different from the prostitute. The status of prostitute has been looked down, comparing with the respectable married woman and minor wives. Thai social and cultural norms have divided women on the basis of sexual morality. Prostitution is shown as sordid, corrupt, or erotic experience for a woman. Also, it is to imply that a woman is the property of men. Furthermore, woman as a commodity is illustrated in the ways that is used and abused for the pleasure of men or for the purpose of economic gain. The practice of women for sexual services is the gateway through which many rural women enter prostitution in Thailand. As Andrew Turton says in "Thai Institutions of Slavery" (1980) that "the slave laws were in force in Old Siam provides less protection for women" (Turton 282). So, the double standard applies to male versus female sexual behavior in Thai society.

For instance, women are sold, overworked, forced into prostitution, and trafficked. Commodified sex in the form of prostitution has seen in the major cities as

Bangkok and Phuket in Thailand. Clients are exclusively men. The male heterosexual desire is naturally a significant element of the gender order. Moreover, international sex tourism has become an important industry for Thailand.

We can see how *Ying Khon Chua* by K. Surangkanang, says something about prostitution being common among the lower-class women who have a role to please men through their sexuality. Women are treated as a commodity a way into the modernization of Thai society. It can be seen in the character of Reun and Samorn. Another type of prostitution involves the middle-class women, who become prostitutes on a part-time, without their respectable identities like Khunying Chetchoam. Different from in *Long Fire* of Krisana Asoksin, her female protagonist has decided to lead her luxurious way of life for improving her life and social status. Then, she falls into the victim of the sexual transnational trade gang. However, every type of prostitute is influenced by the patriarchal structure of society.

In case the income of family is insufficient, women will leave the village to work in the city as low-paid domestic or factory work to send money back home. They are discouraged from asking for money from their family and women are more obligated to send money back home than men are. As Luang Wichitwathakan puts it in *Huang Rak Haew Luk*:

Women do not want anything more than to be considered human beings. Women do not want equal rights to men. All they ask is to be allowed to have a life and the right to think for themselves. (Wichitwathakan 563)

In K. Surangkanang's *Ying Khon Chua*, the issue of prostitution can be seen in female characters of Kamala Markandaya in *Nectar in a Sieve*. Poverty also forced Irawaddy into prostitution. She sells her body to men and feeds Kuti, her youngest brother with money earned through prostitution. The commercialization of sex is also seen in Khuthi who trades in flesh. Within the prostitution, the reason to force Khuthi is different from Irawaddy. However, Khuthi is similar to Irawaddy as representations of Kamala Markandaya's female characters who are rural victims of urban civilization. As a result, Irawaddy is a part of human degradation. Industrialization and urbanization provide the material basis of modernity that forces the creation of

new gender roles. Thus, the cultural and traditional norms force into prostitution Reun, Samorn, Irawaddy, and Khuthi, who are considered inferior to “normal” women, because they cross the morality line assigned by society. Then, they become tainted. Through prostitution, women’s bodies seem to be commodified as sexual objects to satisfy men’s sexual desire. From this view, women have been perceived as victims of patriarchal society. The image of women is looked as passive and powerless under the male’s control with the power relations.

In Thai literary works, initially the prostitutes and prostitution were not a subject matter in literature, though the problem of prostitution became a social issue from the 1900s onwards. This absence was due to the condemnable disposition and the supported moral inferiority of women in the trade. Likewise, Chalidaporn Songsamphan mentions in *Women’s Studies in Asia Series: Thailand: Power, Knowledge and Justice* that:

To be labeled a ‘bad girl’ or ‘slut’ means a woman is outcast and disrespected. The fear of being labeled as such keeps women on the accepted and ‘moral’ sexual track. Because of this mechanism, women try to control their bodies and sexuality. (Songsamphan 171)

However, K. Surangkanang renders them as inappropriate heroines in tradition of written forms in Thai literature. And, they are associated with the patronage of the royal court and Buddhist texts. As a result, prostitution had become one dimension of social realisms.

By the 1920s, prostitution entered public discussion through print media as a social problem. According to Scot Barmé, he proposes in his seminal study *Woman, Man, Bangkok: Love, Sex, and Popular Culture in Thailand* (2002). The thriving sex trade had become “one of the most ubiquitous features of the urban landscape” (Barmé 81). It was largely due to urbanization and modernization themselves. Modernization also has affected various aspects of society such as education, legislation, administration, habitation, transportation, finance, and so on. “There was a growing demand from the immigrant Chinese workforce, Western seamen and travelers, and the expanding Siamese salaried-bureaucrat clientele. These were a

direct result of the major government administrative reform” (Barmé 6) under Rama V at the turn of the twentieth century.

By supporting, “the urban, monetary economic environment drew vulnerable women who had no education, means of livelihood, or familial/social protection into prostitution, especially after the abolition of slavery in 1905” (Hong 343). In another view, Somsri Sukumalanan also gives her perceptive opinion on this traditional issue in her book *Satri Phattana*.

Traditionally, society urged a woman to keep her virginity for her husband. Now, women have more roles in society. They are more independent. Should they still follow the old teaching of acting modesty or should they have the freedom of showing their expression as openly as men can? Some maintain that if a young woman wants to express her feelings in public, she should have the right to do so. They say that everybody does it now. The Westerners do it too ... I prefer that young women keep their modesty. Not for others but for themselves. Our body (our chastity) is a valuable possession. Women can be equal to men without behaving like men. They shouldn't use physical contact to express their feelings and emotions. (Sukumalanan 56)

Traditional Thai woman has long been taught to regard their virginity as the most precious possession in their life. Sunthon Phu states on the ideal Thai women in *Suphasit Son Ying* that women are good or valuable only when they are virgins. So, parents, teachers have continued to prescribe this concept to the young people. Traditionally, a woman had to make the man realize that he could not have her virginity without marrying her first. When a man had the virginity of a woman, she would feel that she belonged to that man alone. Likewise, Luang Wichitwathakan explains the importance of virginity for women that:

A husband who ‘breaks’ the virginity of his wife will always honor her and be considerate of her feelings forever. On the contrary, if the husband knows that his wife has lost her virginity before marriage, he will not honor and respect her. Thus, virginity is still important for Thai women. Those who keep themselves chaste will find a good husband. (Wichitwathakan 206)

It has reflected the patriarchal character of Thai family. When a woman loses her virginity before marriage, it is a mark of shame for her family. Thai idiom considers an unmarried woman who loses her chastity as 'soiled' and her parents have to 'put her in a basket and wash her in the water.' So, the premarital chastity for women has been practices among all levels of Thai society among well-to-do urban and rural families.

The double standard of male and female premarital chastity has affected the relations between single men and women. Women have been taught not to trust male strangers. They have always lived in fear that all men wanted to take advantage of their body. Adolescent women have been advised to keep their distance from men as much as possible for protecting their virginity and reputation.

In *Ying Khon Chua*, K. Surangkanang has portrayed her female characters in control of their own fate and their own choices. Reun stands for women who got her love without marriage. Because of prostitution, Reun becomes a victim of traditional and cultural norms. She could not get opportunity to stand like normal woman. She suffers the social pressure. As her prostitute friend Samorn says that "he's never going to accept that you're the mother of his child. We're prostitutes, remember, Reun. We have to know our place" (TP 72). Reun feels alienation in her society. She is a person who is a victim of social forces. These social forces block the individual's quest for meaningful existence. Alienation can lead a person to exile, separated from culture and tradition.

However, the feeling of alienation of Reun is different from Aunt Alamelu in *Two Virgins*. Aunt Alamelu is characterized as a traditional Indian woman. As Margaret P. Joseph comments that:

Aunt Alamelu is the rock of tradition, the norm of moral behavior, and perhaps the only convincing character in the book. She is a familiar figure in the Indian joint family, combining in herself the poor relation, the widow and the interfering sis-in-law. (Joseph 147)

Aunt Alamelu lives under the protection of her brother and sister-in-law. And, she has no freedom to express her opinions and lacks her identity in the house. She tries to bring up Lalitha into the traditional way.

You, respectable girl, a girl from a respected family ... you want to be a nautch girl, a devadasi such as no one in our line not for twenty generations has ever descended to being, is that your ambition? (TV 62)

However, Lalitha represents the new generation of Indian women who assert their distinct feminine identity. Aunt Alamelu represents a form of alienation in which a person who unable to accept the social values of society and refuses to participate in the social process. As a result, Aunt Alamelu's idea opposes Lalitha.

I know what is going on these days, these days young people think they know best, they have no respect for their elders, they have no respect for anything except their own willful ways, in my days do you think a respectable girl would have dared to speak as you do. I respect what is worthy of respect! (TV 62)

As Diana Trilling (1978) notes in her article "The Liberated Heroine" that "she (the liberated heroine) is a fictional creation whose first concern is the exploration and realization of female self-hood" (Trilling 510). When Lalitha argues in the self-defensive way, Aunt Alamelu leaves the house and goes on a pilgrimage for peace. Aunt Alamelu, who is a traditional Indian woman, feels alienation from her family. And in *A Silence of Desire*, Premala feels increase alienation from her husband Kitsamy. She hides her feelings of loneliness and frustration. Premala tries herself to suit Kitsamy's modern taste but he never understands her sentiments.

Alienation refers to the different ways in which those who is distanced or distances himself/herself from society. The women's alienation originates in social conventions which do not allow a happy existence for women, for they are objects in the eyes of males in the patriarchal society. The feeling of alienation also has been shown in *Possession*. As one female character Ellie, she is Jewish maid-servant of British woman Caroline. Ellie is a crippled girl of twenty years. She had gone from concentration camp to liberation centre to resettlement camp. She is one of the victims of human cruelty perpetrated by the Nazi army.

She had no parents, no state, no passport, no papers-none of those hallow stacking blocks on which the acceptable social being is built. Her one asset what that she was trained and fully experienced domestic help. (PS 72)

Ellie feels culturally and socially alienated when she positioned herself for searching her real identity. And, Annabel is related to Caroline as a rebel. She is a girl who had turned down her family's traditional plans in the marriage market. So, Ellie and Annabel have portrayed as a woman who lost her identity.

Kamala Markandaya has expressed the feeling of the people in an alien country and her novels deal with the tension between the two races and two countries. Women are alienated from their culture, religion and family responsibilities. As a result, *Possession* and *Ying Khon Chua* are written in different times, different nations and different cultures. Both novels have some comparable points in alienation. It is interesting that Ellie's alienation is much different from that of Reun.

The story of *Ying Khon Chua* lies on the unconventional love of Thai woman that is not accepted by Thai society. Another one, Ellie in *Possession* is alienated woman from different nations and races as British and Jewish. However, both Reun and Ellie have the same of alienated feeling. The lives of women are illustrated via the female characters, Ellie and Reun, whose have the feeling of alienation and troubles, given by society. Patriarchal society has originated and affected the alienation to women which lead them to suffer the dissimilar social background. And, it has made them to face the tragic lives. As a result, feeling alienation can happened in women's mind in various situations.

Moreover, within alienation the social and psychological pressure on woman leads them to commit suicide. The self-destruction can also be the last resort of alienated characters. As Lertchai Sirichai points out that the characters commit suicide because of mental and social pressures, shown in "Alienation in Thai Short Stories (B.E. 2507-2511)" (1987). They feel meaningless and become social outsiders without human dignity. As Reun, because of wrong value judgment, she is defeated to social problems for her survival which lead to psychological conflicts, loss, depression and meaninglessness.

Suicide is considered a social phenomenon within the areas of social and psychological problems. Suicide is committed more by women than men owing to the role changing and emotional pressures: marital situation, loneliness, failure in love and the feeling of alienation. Although committing suicide is religiously regarded as evil, sometimes it is used as the last and best solution of characters in literature who encounter problems too pressing to endure. As Reun faces the most of social and psychological problems she feels like an aliened social subject. Then she decides that she will end her life.

Likewise, in another Thai novel, *Khvamrak Khrang Sutthai (The Last Love, 1973)* by Suwannee Sukhontha, the female protagonist Ros encounters the problem of alienation. Ros is an early thirty-year-old, middle-class divorcee and mother of three children. After divorced, Ros's children stay with their grandmother while Ros works as an illustrator and lives alone on a small income. Ros, then, decides her own fate: to end her life while "the last love" still belongs to her, wishing to have a happy life with her children and Pat in the next life. Finally, Ros chooses the sea as her ultimate place of rest. She chooses suicide as her escape from the feared loss of love.

However, Ros's ending of life is much more different from that of Reun. Reun does not do it because she is aware of the importance of life. Thai people believe in *karma*. Reun believes that her sufferings are the result of her past deeds. Then, she checks her self and leaves the idea of committing suicide.

Women also suffered disadvantage in educational system. Women have got chance for education less than the men. This is also the main cause of lower status of women. The illiteracy is a major problem in Asian countries. The lack of education is mainly among poor people.

In terms of woman's education, Rukmani and Reun are represented as the less literate Asian women as well as Eastern women. In *Nectar in a Sieve*, Nathan, Janaki, Kali, and other rural characters, are not educated. Rukmani is different from the traditional Indian women of her time because she is literate and her husband supports her. Although Nathan is uneducated man, he does not oppose Rukmani's education for her sons. As Indian women in that time, Rukmani's mother is illiterate who thinks

that education for women is not necessary. She says that “what use that a girl should be learned” (NS 11) because she thinks that the traditional woman has to do only house works so education is not necessary.

In the 1960s, when a strong feminist wave started, a protest movement was launched by women of the west for equal social, political, economical, and legal with men. As the liberal feminists believe in insisting for freedom of women, they focused on the equality of opportunity between males and females. They have ignored the social structural factors as a basic cause of inequality in patriarchal and capitalist societies. Initially, Mary Wollstonecraft represents the beginning of the liberal feminist movement. She wrote *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792).

But I still insist, that not only the virtue, but the knowledge of the two sexes should be the same in nature, if not in degree, and that women, considered not only as moral, but rational creatures, ought to endeavor to acquire human virtues (or perfections) by the *same* means as men, instead of being educated like a fanciful kind of *half* being, one of Rousseau’s wild chimeras. (Wollstonecraft 39)

Mary Wollstonecraft argues that women ought to have an education with their position just as men in society. If women had no education, they will not have strong voice. The inferior education women receive is directly responsible for their subordinate status. The education is an agent that helps them to enforce patriarchy. They also believe such a change in equal opportunities and educational policies.

As in *Nectar in a Sieve*, Rukmani taught all her sons how to read and write, she says that “when my child is ready...I will teach him too; and I practiced harder than ever lest my fingers should lose their skill” (NS 13). And, when Rukmani go to the city, she can work as a letter-writer to earn a little of money for rearing her family. However, Rukmani’s education cannot help her to earn enough for her family.

Education is not a tool of guarantee in which women are treated equally to men. As in the case of Reun, the less literate woman cannot spend her life as a normal woman after fleeing from a brothel. Although she gets the new job as a maid, Wit’s friend Khun Udom unexpectedly comes to meet her at this place. Khun Udom knows

that she is a prostitute. If anyone in the new work place knows this, Reun cannot do any work over there.

Reun thought as much too. She was worried that if Khun Udom made any mention of it to the owner of the house, then she would be driven out immediately, because she had been a prostitute. Her employer was bound to disapprove. Besides, that was not all, for he might think that she was up to no good in this house. (TP 98)

The status of prostitute is looked certainly as lower than that of normal people. People in society still resist and disdain the prostitution definitely. In the modern Thai period, there was development in an acceptance the literate bourgeoisie of the national Thai woman. The image of the national Thai woman develops as a counter representation to the national ideal. Up to the Revolution of 1932, the participation of women in the movement led up to the overthrow of the absolute monarchy. The Western powers required that is about equality many issues such as the law, marriage law, related to egalitarian rights. In contrast to the end of nineteenth century, there was a female state in the male-dominant state.

... a highly ordered society of women with various ranks of officials (*thao*) who governed the Inner Palace (*fai nai*) and took responsibility for finance, education, security, the resolution of disputes, and provisioning. (Reynolds 132)

In *Dok Fa* K. Surangkanang has portrayed Sangrawee as high literate Thai woman who was educated in England. Sangrawee is the stereotype of Thai women. As a female protagonist in this novel, Sangrawee has better education as the female character's education is above the primary level. She goes to study abroad and then comes back to help her parents financially. For economic status of woman in this novel, it is noted that the educated women can work outside like men. Therefore, literate people have always been respected. As a modern woman, she protests against the social conventions of patriarchal system. Western influences have played a major role in changing status and role of Thai women. K. Surangkanang has portrayed the modern Thai women as self-confident and proud of themselves.

King Rama IV (1851-1868) was the first to modernize Thai society. Thai women were gradually encouraged to take part in social activities and educational

opportunities were first offered to women of high class society. Later, in the reign of King Rama V, “in 1871, the first official boy school was established” (Thai Ministry of Education, 1998). Then, in 1874, the first official girl’s school was founded. In provincial towns, women have got less opportunity to have formal education in schools. Going to school exposes women to other spheres outside the home and help them broaden their experiences.

Field Marshal P. Pibulsonggram (1938-1944) was the third Prime Minister in Thai constitutional monarchy. He believed that women have the capability to be good citizens. His policy was based on women’s education and solving their problems. “In 1974, a new constitution stated for the first time that men and women have equal rights. Thailand was the first Asian country to provide this” (Fry et al 459). A right previously held only by men and a divorce application had to be approved by her husband but the present legislation permits women to divorce their husbands. And, recently the Constitutional Court gives women the right to retain their maiden names after marriage.

The situation of gender inequality is rigidly sustained by the cultural and traditional norms. Similarly Indian and Thai societies has assigned women secondary role. And, some forbid them from participating in public activities with men.

Women have been portrayed as matter, body, fluidity, boundarylessness, irrationality, artificiality, and the like. Women are the opposite or mirror images (hence spectrum) of men, who assigned reason, truth, authority, and authenticity. (Ryan 68)

The gender differences are highly relevant to the division of work. R.W. Connell mentions the concept of production relations that gender divisions between ‘work’ and ‘home.’ The economic sphere is culturally defined as men’s world, while domestic life is defined as women’s world. According to the Norwegian sociologist Oystein Holter, he argues that this division is the structure basis of the gender order. His point is that the notions of masculinity and femininity are closely connected with this division. In the economy, work is done for pay, labor is bought and sold, and products of labor are placed on a market profit prevail. Differently, in the home, work is done for love, the product of labor is a gift, a logic of gift-exchange prevails. From

these structural different, Holter argues that flow characteristically different experiences for men and women. House-work and job-work are done in different social relations. Consequently, they have very different cultural meanings.

Women and men play out traditional stereotypical feminine and masculine roles. Their gender role has mainly set in differentiation between male/public and female/private domains. The male-dominated system had set up men more than women for further education or more prosperous work opportunities for long time. The corporation or the firm or the company is the dominant form of economic organization of society. It is the main institution of developed capitalism. As R.W. Connell mentions that:

Corporations are gendered institutions, with a gendered history. 'Companies' of merchants in early modern Europe were entirely composed of men...these too were socially defined as men's institutions. The creation of the modern form of capital was part of the historical process that created a masculinized public realm. (Connell 98)

Marxist feminism views the oppression of women as a direct result of the institution of private property. This oppression is rooted in capitalism of the economic system. The special oppression of women results primarily from their traditional position in the family. This implies that women from participation in public production and relegates them to domestic work in the private world of home. As Friedrich Engels describes about the family development in the third stage produced 'civilization' that:

The sole exclusive aims of monogamous marriage were to make the man supreme in the family, and to propagate as the future heirs to his wealth, children indisputably his own. (Engels 128)

Engels mentions that "the establishment the exclusive supremacy of the man supreme shows its effect first in the patriarchal family" (Engels 121). He exposes the historical basis of women's oppression. When women enter the labor market, there remains the problem of inequality. Within the labor force, women were reduced to the secondary status and get low-payment than men. Likewise, Wolf Naomi mentions that "only models and prostitutes do women earn more money than men" (Naomi 65).

This is a reason why Luce Irigaray (1990) suggests that “many services are organized on the assumption that society consists of family units in which a male works and a woman stays at home” (Irigaray 97).

As in *Ying Khon Chua*, K. Surangkanang stresses in ironic tone on some career like doctor or judge. These valued careers have gotten respect from many people but K. Surangkanang has portrayed any bad manner on them. As a result, she remarks that the high esteemed people also have something immoral more than Reun who is looked down as prostitute.

He was reputed to be the finest, and in his hands lay the powers to mete out justice. He was honored by all...he had people at his command. At home, his wife and children went and children went in awe of him. But once inside a brothel, his manner changed. (TP 160)

It is as in the words of Engels, “within the family the husband is the bourgeois and the wife represents the proletariat” (Engels 65). Women carry the burden of the family. She has enslaved herself for her husband, children and family. Through the traditional Thai woman who is a silent sufferer, K. Surangkanang has brought up the theme of gender issues.

Historically, women’s identity was related to men as wife, mother, sister, and daughter. In the male-dominant society, woman is supposed to be an ideal wife, mother, homemaker as several roles in the family. With women’s gender role, any required attributes are expected from them such as sacrifice, service, tolerance and submissiveness. This set makes that a woman is not an equal to man. Furthermore, the tradition and culture trains a woman think herself as an inferior being. As in essay *Gender Trouble* (1990) by Judith Butler, she advocates ‘gender trouble’ as a way of challenging traditional notions of gender identities. Butler discusses gender identity, the relations between gender and sex and introduces the notion of gender as performance or gender performativity. She argues that gender is something that one does.

Gender is always a doing, though not doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed ... There is no gender identity behind the

expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very expressions that are said to be its results. (Butler 25)

Butler's ideas about individuals using performative acts to change the way people think about gender because few people subvert conventional notions of gender identity. In contrast to the fixed gender in a person, gender should be seen not as a fixed attribute or idea, but as a "fluid variable which shift and change in different contexts and at different times" (Gauntlett 139). Gender identity and gender role can change in the context of people's lives, related to specific time and place. In other words, gender is a performance. It is what you do at particular times rather than a universal who you are.

Kamala Markandaya uses the technique of first person narrative to exhibit the social realism of women in *Nectar in a Sieve*. According to M.H. Abrams and Geoffrey Galt Harpham, the literary term 'first-person points of view' is that:

The mode...limits the matter of the narrative to what the first-person narrator knows, experiences, infers, or finds out by talking to other characters. We distinguish between the narrative 'I' who is only a fortuitous witness and auditor of the matters he relates; or who is a participant, but only a minor or peripheral one, in the story; or who is himself or herself the central character in the story. (Abrams and Harpham 303)

As Anasuya in *Possession*, the narrator is Rukmani who is an Indian woman. Rukmani is female protagonist who reveals the feminine sensibility. As Dr. Rakhi esteems Kamala Markandaya that:

In her writings, Kamala Markandaya shows signs of profound influence of a feminist school of writing. In her attitude to women, she is a conservative feminist, to a certain extent and feminism is implicit in her novels are a presentation of the basic fact of awakening feminist consciousness. (Rakhi 67)

Different from K. Surangkanang's novels, she has used the omniscient point of view to relate the story as in *Ying Khon Chua* and *Rachawadee Seemuang*. Within the story, the narrator knows everything that needs to be known about the agents, actions, and events toward the character's thoughts, feelings, and motives.

Kamala Markandaya has written her novels with the changing Indian mindset. Her novels have been used as a medium to reveal different facets of the image of women. Mostly Indian women believe in Indian culture and tradition. She has drawn the image of her women in the Indian context where is a male-dominant country. She has portrayed them in many shades of life by showing the real existence of woman as struggled between tradition and modernism. Her female characters like Rukmani and Irawaddy in *Nectar in a Sieve*, Anasuya and Lady Caroline in *Possession*; Sarojini in *The Silence of Desire*, Mirabai, Premala, Roshan in *Some Inner Fury*, Saroja and Lalitha in *Two Virgins* are nobler, wiser, stranger and better than their male counterparts along with different contexts. Although her women are regarded as inferior in social practices, Kamala Markandaya always has kept her female characters with the strength of adaptation and makes the worth-living as well.

The female characters of both women novelists fall into two categories. One is who is influenced by tradition and culture, and social roles. They perceive the ideal womanhood such as a sacrificed wife, a maternal instinct, an obedient daughter, and a marginal participant in public domain. Another one is those who resist against the traditional womanhood and attempt to assert their real identity. The different portraits of women deal with real female experiences.

This shows how the treatment of gender has been taken by Indian woman Kamala Markandaya and Thai woman K. Surangkanang. So, both have similarity and dissimilarity in their depiction. Gender consciousness especially on women has become a major concept of women novelists Kamala Markandaya and K. Surangkanang. They have very skillfully depicted women's suppression as well as oppression at the deepest level of sensitivity. Their writing is fighting for women's right, identity, freedom and equality. Their novels represent a contribution to understanding of the contemporary world as seen by women's eyes. It is to imply that the image of women in Asian novel has undergone a change of society. Women novelist has moved on portraying traditional, self-sacrificed images of women, searching for their identity towards protesting the social constructions, set by male dominance.

Gender is a powerful ideological device which produces and reproduces the limits on people, male and female. It is necessary to know about gender differentiation and gender inequality and how gender is reduced in social situations. Many social forces in Indian and Thai societies have produced changes in gender relations.

Gender mostly influences every part of person's life. The stereotype of gender role in each culture and tradition, and in each country, will be accepted or rejected depending on the people in society. There is no difference in India and Thailand. Indian and Thai societies have defined rigidly on gender issues; there are many challenges and acceptances in the gender norms, assigned by society.

This chapter adds to one's awareness about the changing social scene and the requirement for changing one's attitudes towards the traditional role of women in this changed socio-economic environment. The theorists who have espoused the cause of woman's emancipation are strong in their recommendation of a change in perspective towards women and their role in society. The body, the voice and the needs and dreams of women need to be addressed. Kamala Markandaya and K. Surangkanang have explored the problems of women. They suffer under male dominance, but they cannot speak and just suffer in silence. Or, even if they speak, their voices are not loud enough to be heard by anyone. Hence, their characters whether male or female, have appeared in the society in such a way that women are treated as passive subjects, subaltern, and non-human being in the male society. Both female novelists, Kamala Markandaya and K. Surangkanang, have especially portrayed their female characters dealing with real-life problems. Their writings have been seen in such a way as to show their right for a declaration that the problems related to women are given by society through the construction of seemingly insurmountable differences based on gender. Moreover, the contention that gender is constructed and performative makes the social division between male and female seem an unwarranted cruelty and injustice. That these attitudes persist despite legislations and changing economic conditions is evidence that cultural hegemony of gender formation is not so easy to uproot. The struggle of women for political rights may have granted them some

victories but the battle for an equal, just and rightful place in society still needs to be fought.