

Women Characters in Kavita Kane's *Karna's Wife: An Outcaste Queen: A Feminist Perspective*

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Abstract:

Since ancient times, Indian literature has been dominated by the patriarchal society. Although one couldn't deny the fact that at the end of the 19th century as well as on the thresholds of 20th century in no time scenario changed and the women who had been living in just a framework of quintessential ideal daughter, wife, daughter in law, and mother due to these changed scenario women emerge as a forthright, maverick and self-reliant. Many Indian female novelists took steps to the fore and raised voice against discrimination, free sex, right of women, plight, suffering and so on. Hence present discipline set off a new term that is Feminism. Present paper too focuses women in the novels of Kavita Kane through the feminist perspective. In Indian Literature we have many women novelists who have been writing merely for the sake of women. In the modern digital era, women have proved their competence instead of depending on sole bread butter earner. She has become the sole money earner of family in many households.

Keywords: Feminist, Patriarchy

Introduction

Literature is the mirror of society. It has been always held a faithful mirror of that era which consist socio economic as well as psychological aspects of specific time. It is never bound to these aspects only but studies the man-women relationship, victims and victors as well as plot creators or the protagonists.

Not only India but all over the globe patriarchal society is dominated from ages. But over the time women became conscious about the fundamental rights, equality, and freedom. Hence revamping the society and the huge change couldn't stop writers to write in their Novels, Poetry, Drama, in the broader discipline of the literature of that time. Hence this sector has been confronting huge socio-psychological change. This crucial life changing phase enter in the life of women. It is remarkable that every part of the globe this changed scenario outstretched. Consequently, this present change, some people understood, misunderstood accepted, rejected, misinterpreted vigorously.

The status of women varies from country to country. Similarly the country like India women has been facing many challenges since ancient times. In the modern digital era too women confront with lots of problems not only in urban life but in rural life. Hence taking into consideration demand of time Indian English novelist come forward to put their views through the novels, and analyse, explain expand the plight, suffering, discrimination of women. Like Namita Gokhale, Anita Nair, Kavita Kane and so on who wrote on women. The present paper deals with the Feminist Perspective in the novel of Kavita Kane's, *Karna's Wife: The Outcaste Queen*.

Kavita Kane

Kavita Kane was born in Mumbai. She also grew in other cities like Patna, Delhi, and Pune. She is an alumna of Fergusson College, Pune and completed her post graduation both in English Literature and Mass Communication from the University of Pune. Although initially she wanted to be in the administrative services, she chooses a career in journalism because she wanted to write and was the only pragmatic career option for writing. She worked for 20 years in various media houses - Magna

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Publications, Daily News and Analysis and The Times of India. After the success of her debut novel, *Karan's Wife*, She became a full time author.

Karan's Wife: An Outcaste Queen

Karan's Wife is a feminist writing, the myth, stories were told by the feminist perspective. Present novel Kavita Kane throws the light on the marginalized character Uruvi, which were throughout the Mahabharata neglected. In the present novel the title suggests that Uruvi was double marginalized, neglected as a first she was a woman and secondly she belongs to outcaste. In the entire novel Uruvi portrait as a bold, courageous, women, who had courage to rebel, raise voice against the patriarchal society. Kane presented Uruvi as Strong women, who is clever and knows to differentiate between fair and unfair thing very well.

Throughout the novel there is discrimination and marginalization in terms of gender and caste. According to A. Rich, *"Re-vision act of looking back of seeing with fresh eyes of entering an old text from a new critical direction is for women more than a chapter in Cultural History. It is an act of Survival"*(18). Kane presented the story before the reader with a feminist perspective just like one could transfer old wine in fresh bottle. In the present novel Kane trying to analyse, interpret female mind.

Uruvi as a Feminist Character

Kavita Kane has portrayed Uruvi as a beauty with brain, fearless princess, who believe in leading life on her own terms. Uruvi is an intelligent woman. She is competent to fight against the misdeed of patriarchal society including her own husband Karna. Hence she gave a new meaning to womanhood. Actually Uruvi portrait as an aggressive women but the fact is that she never ever has been tolerated injustice towards women or anything else. Uruvi was an epitome of justice.

Kane introduce the character Uruvi as *"The spirited daughter had inherited her mother's glorious beauty and her father's sharp mind and both sizzled I her short flashes of temper"*(9). Uruvi was princess she belongs to a elite class, but after marriage she confront totally different realm. Uruvi was single child of her parents, that's why she enjoyed all types of freedom, luxury rather her life was a bed of roses. Uruvi was a woman, who believe never believe in injustice but some part of the novel seemed as she was arrogant. In fact this arrogance is against the patriarchal society their notions and norms.

Uruvi was a daughter of Pukaya's king Vahusha. Uruvi loved Karna whom most of the people in society treated scornfully. But Kane interprets that Karna's boldness, macho beauty attracts her towards karna. Hence she thrown away all the norms, notions of Society and she married an outcaste man. Uruvi was very close to her father so she always wants a husband just like her father who should possess macho beauty just like her father. She always wanted to become a courageous princess. *"Princess Uruvi saddled her horse each morning to ride to the Gurukul after she spent her day immersed in the world of Medicinal herbs and other remedies"*(15). King Vahusha, were unhappy with the decision of her daughter Uruvi as he could foresee the future of Uruvi. After marriage Uruvi would have to face so many problems because Uruvi was a Kshatriya and she is going to marry an outcaste man Karna, which the society never would accept. Neither king Vahusha nor anyone that time had courage to break the norms of Society. But Uruvi was so determined she already decided that she would marry Karna otherwise she would remain unmarried whole life. So the king Vahusha a helpless father reminds his daughter Uruvi about the social consequences of her marriage. He says, *"Society will not permit me to keep you unmarried, nor will it allows you to marry a charioteer's son. You can't marry a half caste"*(18). These words come from the helpless father who fully aware the notions and norms of the society.

Uruvi was an ideal wife whenever Karna reveals anxiety, restlessness of being a Sutputra. Uruvi was the one who consoles Karna and says, *“Sutputra who was born to show value and achieve glory. Honour is not in a name of status but what you cover in your heart”*(42).

Kunti

Kunti was an epitome of sacrifice; she was victimized in the patriarchal hegemony. Kunti was a woman who lost everything her husband, father, son, kingdom, pleasure everything she lost. She was the woman who in her entire life suffered a lot. Each and every woman wants to live a happy life with her husband and children. And for the same pleasure happiness she craved whole life but her entire life she deprived from these desires by patriarchal society as well as by fate. Nevertheless she without fear lived her life with dignity. Kane's word, *“Kunti who would have preferred to have died with her husband but lived to be a mother not just to her sons but to infant sons of Madri as well Kunti, the queen mother, who in an instant become a king's widow without a kingdom”*(27). Due to his greatness and sacrifice of Kunti, Uruvi admire as well as appreciate Kunti and had a great respect for Kunti. Actually Kunti was an adorable lady.

Kshatriya gives freedom to the bride in her swayanwar to select her soul mate. Hence Uruvi willingly, consciously select Karna as her better half.

She was aware that Karna was belong to outcaste Nevertheless she select him as she was attracted towards his macho beauty and talent as well. Owing to this Uruvi's decision all Kshatriya became unhappy and blame Uruvi and her father. But her father protects Uruvi by saying that, *“This is a Swayanwar and the bride to have the final say. She has the right to reject any of the suitors for any reason. She has the right to choose whomsoever she wants”* (41). This union takes place between Uruvi the Kshatriya princess and karna. Karna the strong warrior who too was became helpless in front of Uruvi's fragile beauty a beauty infused with a fierce determination.

Vrushali

Kane presents before the reader next female character, Vrushali who is a first wife of Karna. Vrushali is an epitome of peace and love. At first when she came to know about the Karna's second marriage instead of becoming aggressive she handled this situation with calmly and remarks in Kane's words, *“If he is going to be happy so be it”*(45).

Being a wife of Karna Uruvi encountered with so many problems, so much humiliated. Present novel Kane presents two different women having different perspectives towards life. One is Vrushali second is Uruvi. Vrushali was a passive women who believes in becoming shadow of her husband whereas Uruvi is an aggressive active women who entire her life became the voice of her husband situation in her life. As when she was princess everyone loves her, eager to talk with her, but now after becoming wife of Karna everyone ignores her, avoid her, avoid to communicate with her and treated her as, *“frosty disdain”* (58). And she became conscious about being a low caste women and she recalled her mother's words as in Kane's words,

“Since ancient times women have been considered inferior. But the novelist Kavita Kane's at a particular moment she recognized the cruelty of superficial world which tried to instill negative spirit in her. But she proved herself that no one can beat her down in her name of spousal chastiment. King Vahusha's comment on her bravery/braveness courage is very odd. Any other person would have locked herself in her home to hide from this deliberately cold treatment and the unkind remarks but not my Uruvi, She is a lioness”(61).

Among all the characters in the present novel Uruvi is portrait as a strong feminist character that has enough courage to struggle for her rights and injustice done by the patriarchal society. Uruvi once questioned Pitamaha Bhishma too without hesitation and fear about his bias attitude towards Karna as a Charioteer's son and always favoring Arjuna. She says to Pitamaha Bishma in Kane's words, *“Karna*

is warrior by his deeds but each time whenever he and Arjuna were compared. Arjuna has won because of his noble birth and not because of his merits. Is that not unfair that it has blown up into a huge wrong?"(67). Kane presents words "Uruvi as women to be in her one rational and other emotional" (67). Uruvi not only performed a duty of wife but a mentor to Karna and timely has proven it. Hence without hesitation shame Karna too admire, accept this fact, and says in Karna says in Kane's words, "It's not just love and beauty as you so dismissively say, Uruvi had taught me a lot of things, She has taught me to live"(67).

Uruvi shattered all the notions of patriarchy. She even attacked verbally by asking questions to Guru Dronacharya, it's a duty of a teacher to impart knowledge equally among the students but Dronacharya done injustice towards Eklavya and Karna and refused to educate them for being outcaste. Uruvi asked question to Guru Dronacharya, in Kane's words, "Is it Dharma of a teacher? How can he be the perfect Guru if he so blatantly partial? If he is not humble and honest, the how he can teach his students those virtue"(75).

Uruvi in the entire novel plays different roles as daughter, wife, strong woman, dutiful queen etc. She loves Karna so passionately, whomsoever I'll treated Karna she burst on them with anger. So once Karna asked her in Kane's words, "Are you going to get angry and abusive with all the people who have behaved me badly with me?"(77) and immediately Uruvi replied, "Yes I shall! I can't bear it, if anyone hurts you"(117). She raises questions in front of royal family too in Kane's words, "From when has any women been informed or asked for advice on court politics and family intrigue?"

Uruvi unlike all modern women she broken all the Orthodox rules of society and asked questions to patriarchal society The death of her husband tortured her a lot. She is haunted with the memories of her husband Karna and lives life as an outcast queen in Karan's home by rejecting the offers of Pandava.

Conclusion

Concussively, Kavita Kane has very beautifully portrayed the marginalized, feminist character of Uruvi. She gave the reader new perspective. Women are the epitome of sacrifice and timely she has proven it through her deeds. Whatever be the circumstances she first keeps her family first just like Uruvi who always think of her husband and became her voice in various paths. She always performs various roles in her life as a daughter, wife, and daughter in law and mother. All these roles she performed with zeal of Zenith. Women never ever depend on men in any era but she respects the notions, rules of society, so she became silent on her injustice. Women have the power to change the world. This is the women who always stand behind her husband as his shadow and became a cause of his success. Nevertheless some male dominated society denied this fact. Women always do the "Ardhnareshvar" duty.

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