



FEMINISTIC APPROACH IN KAVITA KANE'S NOVELS: EMPOWERING WOMEN'S VOICES THROUGH MYTHOLOGICAL NARRATIVES

Nitasha Rani¹ Dr. Vijaya Khatri²

1. Research Scholar, Shri Khusal Das University Hanumangarh
2. Research Supervisor, Shri Khusal Das University Hanumangarh

ABSTRACT

This research investigates the utilization of feminist concepts in the books of Kavita Kane and their impact on elevating women's voices in the realm of Indian mythology. Kavita Kane's literary works skillfully entwine feminist themes, offering complex depictions of female characters and their battles for self-governance and acknowledgment in patriarchal society. This research utilizes a feminist analytical framework to examine how Kane undermines conventional gender norms, questions patriarchal systems, and emphasizes the autonomy and strength of her female main characters. This research examines how Kane reappropriates and reinterprets legendary stories in her books, including "Sita's Sister" and "Menaka's Choice," to emphasize the experiences, viewpoints, and voices of women. This research aims to shed light on the importance of Kane's contribution to feminist discourse in contemporary Indian fiction by placing her works in the context of larger feminist literature. The findings derived from this study are anticipated to enhance our comprehension of how literature may function as a mechanism for feminist advocacy and societal transformation..

Keywords: Kavita Kane's, Mythological, Novels, Women's

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important aspects of Kane's books is the comprehensive investigation of women's identities and the ways in which they manifest themselves within the confines of ancient Indian culture. Through her meticulous research and imaginative storytelling, Kane illuminates the multifaceted nature of feminine agency, revealing the ways in which her characters navigate societal expectations, confront patriarchal structures, and assert their autonomy in a world fraught with challenges and limitations. Kane's protagonists embody a spectrum of experiences and emotions that resonate with contemporary readers who are grappling with questions of gender, power, and selfhood. Whether it be Sita's unwavering devotion to duty and self-sacrifice, Urmila's

quiet resilience and intellectual prowess, or Menaka's defiance of celestial conventions, Kane's protagonists are able to achieve this.

As part of this analysis, we look into Kane's mythological novels with a particular emphasis on the portrayal of women's identities and the ways in which they express themselves about themselves. We examine the ways in which Kane reimagines and reinterprets the stories of these female characters, putting an emphasis on their agency, complexity, and significance in the modern world. We do this by drawing upon feminist literary theory, mythological studies, and cultural critique. The purpose of this study is to uncover the layers of meaning that are embedded within Kane's narratives and to shed light on the broader implications of her work for our understanding of gender, mythology, and the construction of female subjectivity. This will be accomplished through the use of close readings of key passages, thematic analysis, and contextual interpretation.

We hope that by doing this investigation, we will be able to make a contribution to the expanding corpus of academic research that acknowledges the transformational potential of literature to question prevailing narratives, promote critical thinking, and elevate voices that are excluded. The purpose of our research is to shed light on the ongoing relevance of these ancient myths and the ways in which they continue to impact our understanding of gender, identity, and power in the modern world. We intend to do this by focusing our analysis on Kane's mythological novels.

Female Struggles then and now

From ancient times, women have been confronted with a variety of challenges all around the world. In the past, women in India were in a more advantageous situation than they are in the present day in regard to their status. The Rig Vedic period, which lasted from 2000 BC to 1500 BC and was characterized by the Aryan community, was characterized by a significant amount of independence for feminine individuals. Having said that, it is not entirely accurate to assert that the women of Ancient India were wholly free from the patriarchal authority that existed within the community. Women had endured a great deal of suffering for their existence, despite the fact that they had enjoyed the taste of freedom in education, marriage, and other areas.

When the later Vedic period, which extends from 1500 BC to 800 BC, is examined in great detail, it becomes clear that the position of women progressively began to decline throughout the course of this time period. In his book "Indian Women through the Ages," P. Thomas asserts that throughout the later Vedic time, people used to think that sons were the only ones who were capable of rescuing their parents from torment, and that girls were incapable of performing this spiritual act. It was because of this concept that women were considered to be exclusive child carriers. It was also during the Post Vedic period when women's status fell to a lower degree than it had been previously. In India, the subordination of Indian women was caused by a number of factors, including foreign invasions, a strong belief in religious traditions, and other factors. This enslavement continues to persist in higher levels of society. On the other hand, during the Post-Vedic Period, the people were encouraged to elevate the position of women by Lord Buddha and the teachings that he had brought out. The most difficult period in India's history was the period that began with the decline of Buddhism and continued until the arrival of Islam in the country. This was the time when the subsequent Puranas and Dharma Shastras were written down. During

this time period, it was mandatory for young women to get married before they reached menstruation, and it was further illegal for widows to remarry. In spite of the fact that the statuses of women degraded to a higher degree during the period of the Mughals, which lasted from 1526 AD to 1857 AD, the names of some Mughal queens were inscribed in golden letters in the history books. It was deemed unlucky for a girl kid to be born into the society from the moment of her birth. In addition to belonging to the top class and the middle class, the Mughal women were subjected to a great deal of subjection at the hands of their male counterparts. Following the arrival of British colonial forces in India in the year 1857, the women's community rose to prominence in support of the cause of India's independence. Despite the fact that they are relatively small in number, women in India were able to advance their own independence via the battle for independence, which continues to have an impact in the 21st century as well.

Objectification of Women

To say that Kavita Kane has been a revelation in the field of mythology is an understatement. In a culture that considers a woman's body and the gender roles she is expected to fulfill to be less important than her identity. The emotional predicaments that define human misery are elevated by her ability to remove herself from the concerns associated with patriarchy while at the same time fleshing out women who are victims of it. When seen from a sociocultural perspective, the female body is sexually objectified, and the look of a woman and her sexual functions are considered to be synonymous with her value. Women in our culture are more likely to be identified and linked with their bodies than men are. This is because men in our society do not identify and relate themselves with their bodies. The act of seeing a woman through the lens of her beauty and admiration is distinct from the act of objectifying a woman. The human race should not be regarded as a collection of objects to be utilized. As a result of the fact that a woman has more to contribute to the world than her physical appearance, she does not deserve to be objectified.

Kavita Kane's works are centered on the female protagonist, and she makes an effort to understand and record the viewpoints of a woman who goes through a variety of societal restrictions. The 'Fisher Queen's Dynasty' revolves around Satyavati, the main character, and her vaulting ambition is what makes her stand out. In addition to this, the novel devotes a significant amount of time and energy to investigating the question of where the boundary should be established between ambition and greed. One of the primary factors that contributes to conflict is power. By utilizing this concept, the author poses the question of whether or not our evaluations of characters would differ according to their gender, caste, and faith. In the same way that traditional legends frequently do with Satyavati, would we have condemned a guy who was in a self-centered and misguided manner? It is possible that Satyavati might be seen as greedy if aspiration were to transform into resolve. In this approach, Kavita Kane's feminist revisionist work, "The Fisher Queen's Dynasty," is being analyzed for instances of "objectification of women."

This is a step in the right direction. Taking into consideration Kane's body of work, which includes promoting the voices of women and bringing the underrepresented female characters to the forefront of the literary canon in the face of patriarchal violence, this may seem like blasphemy. But in this instance, the author is not the primary focus; rather, the attention is directed toward the patriarchal practices that are present in our society as well as inside the novel, which the author

has vowed to expose. The author contrasts Satyavati with the males who live in her environment rather than making fun of the characters whose behaviors are determined by their gender, an approach that is particularly effective for women. Whether it is her actual father, the king of Chedi, who gives up on her at birth (for the sole reason that she was born a female), the wise man Parashara, who exploits Satyavati as a means for a son, or King Shantanu, who is drawn to her sexuality, all of these individuals have a desire to have a child with her. Everyone in Satyavati's life who takes advantage of her body is, in turn, directed by her. She is the one who is in charge. For this reason, she is referred to as a number of different things, including but not limited to a wicked temptress, an opportunist, a misbegotten, and a cold-hearted person. A foreshadowing of the idea that women are reduced to their sexuality occurs prior to the commencement of the primary storyline. Satyavati adds gasoline to the fire when she finds out that her mother was raped by Uparichar Vasu, the king of Chedi, her father, and that she was then discarded by her father. This information only serves to exacerbate the situation. This invigorates her desire to reclaim what is properly hers and to rectify the injustice that has been inflicted upon her. The concept of a woman who has been mistreated and is seeking justice is brought up again with Amba when her unending efforts to get Bhishm to marry her in order to make one for the wrongs that have been committed against her are unsuccessful.

After that, she makes a solemn vow to send him and his kingdom back to ruin. In contrast to Sita, who blames herself for her misfortune, declaring that "...it is as a consequence of my evil destiny and my own misdeeds in the past that I have suffered all of this..." Sita is the one who takes responsibility for her tragedy. Nevertheless, Amba brings destruction upon herself in the process, which is a terrible outcome. On the other hand, in the book "Ahalya's Awakening," Kane delves deeply into Ahalya's experience as a woman and demonstrates the varied perspectives that people have on how a woman is perceived by the world. The first chapter of this book begins with a conversation between King Mudgal and his newborn daughter, Ahalya. In this conversation, King Mudgal tells Ahalya that she is the most beautiful girl in the world. He also compares her to her brother. The first chapter of the book provides a key viewpoint on the portrayal of female characters throughout the rest of the book. There are women in the world who are capable of surviving on their own, who deserve to be supported, and who can contribute to the improvement of the world that is still evolving. As soon as Ahalya was born, the first thing that came to her parents' minds was the question of who she would eventually marry. At the age of sixteen, Ahalya began to hear that she should get married as soon as possible, without taking into mind the fact that she wanted to be a Rasika. In spite of the fact that Indra had been having extramarital affairs, Ahalya's parents, Nalayani and Mudgal, granted Indra the opportunity to marry her as their first priority. Because of their physical power, men are not seen and valued by society just for their virtues.

However, the manner in which Indra objectified women was a prevalent practice that all of the males in the community disapproved of when they were given the opportunity to be heard. His perspective on women was that they are born to be the daughter of their fathers, and then they enter into marriage and become known as the wife of their husbands. He referred to women as "just lovely creatures," which is a phrase that encapsulates his attitude perfectly: a woman is nothing more than an item. The purpose of marriage is to provide a woman with a man as an object, so that she may take care of her husband, perform activities around the house, as well as look after

the children. Here, Ahalya had her aspirations, but society did not place much value on them, and as a result, she was married off to face the consequences of her desires. In his role as a Rishi, Gautam utilized Ahalya whenever he desired her and used her as a pleasure-giving object. However, when he desired space, he kept his family to himself outside of the relationship. Similarly, in one particular incident in "The Fisher Queen's Dynasty," the author makes the observation that Satyavati is like "a used glass of wine after a good drink" to Shantanu after they have been married and his sensual response to her has left him. The essence of women being viewed as things and possessions is encapsulated in this statement. Neera Desai and Maithreyi Krishnaraj state that throughout history, women have been viewed either as victims of social practices or as targets for development, as was the case during the post-independence period. However, they have never been considered as participants in the process of development. On the other hand, Satyavati and Ahalya would never agree with regards to this concept. Despite the fact that they always create a pawn out of the individuals in front of them, they never actually become one themselves. Kane explains, during the course of the story, how the standards that society has established have resulted in an astounding injustice being committed against a woman. Instead of being viewed as an item for the person who is currently using the product, a woman need to be regarded as a dream for the future. It is to our good fortune that Kavita Kane does not put her readers in a precarious position. She then goes on to offer a woman who, in a culture that equates female identity with her body, shapes a character who utilizes her body for purpose rather than pleasure as "her sharpest weapon to cleave and crave a better life for herself despite the fact that she is in a world that makes this mistake."

The Dearth of Choice

The people that inhabit the planet have devised a system for categorizing individuals in order to make decisions based on their gender, and this system does not take into account the fact that they are human beings who possess creative abilities. Women have an incalculable amount of challenges when it comes to the production of decisions, whereas males have the right to express their preferences and opinions when it comes to making decisions that affect the whole globe. The world has not given a woman the ability to make a decision. It is the lack of empowerment of women to make decisions that is the root cause of the gender gap in employment, the absence of women in leadership positions, inequality in the workplace, and other related issues. The concept of choice needs to be made relevant in a variety of different ways, and there needs to be a shift in the way that people think about who will have the right. It is possible to examine Kavita Kane's works in order to have a better understanding of the disparity expressed in the ability of women to make decisions. The main character in Ahalya's Awakening was never given the authority to make a choice regarding any of the occurrences that took place in her presence or absence during the course of the course of the story. Ahalya was never given the opportunity to make her own individualized decision. The world suffers nothing but a significant setback in terms of its progress when the right of a woman to choose her own personal decision is taken away from her control. Within the realm of life, women possess the most power in terms of their capacity to generate innovative thoughts and decisions.

At first, her family members and gurus were the ones who made decisions regarding her life, but later on, her spouse followed in their footsteps. In the historical era, equal access was not granted

in terms of academics and careers, and Kane emphasizes on the struggles that Ahalya has gone through in order to educate herself. The decision and actions of a woman are not her own; rather, they must be accepted by her parents. Throughout the course of the book, Ahalya had the desire to pursue her studies further; however, her parents did not grant her the freedom to make that decision. Despite the fact that she was not willing to marry Lord Indra, her mother had a strong desire to see her daughter married as soon as possible, and she wanted to marry Indra. It was difficult for Ahalya to achieve her goal of becoming a Rishika since she was not permitted to steer the course that she desired to take. This meant that she faced a number of challenges along the way. Given the circumstances surrounding Ahalya's marriage, it is clear that a woman does not have the authority to select her life spouse in accordance with her own volition. It is the responsibility of society and a woman's parents to determine whether or not she has the right to pick a life mate for herself. When it comes to choosing a life mate for a woman, societal conventions are an extremely important factor to consider. When it comes to her marriage, the woman is not given the importance to formulate her own viewpoint. When it comes to matters concerning the household, women are the only ones who have the ability to make choices. In a same manner, the women of the Fisher Queen's Dynasty, whether it is Satyavati herself, Kripa, or the three Kasi Princesses, are all constrained by patriarchal traditions. These traditions require that a woman's life revolve on the family, marriage, motherhood, and domesticity. It was not an easy task for Satyavati to achieve the goal that she had set for herself. Satyavati, a courageous woman who possesses complete consciousness and beauty, speaks the following: "I have power over only myself and not over others." She only has a "chance" to make the most of her contact with Parashar and Shantanu due to the fact that she is the only one left with it. In spite of this, it is never permitted to escape it. As a result of the absence of any conscience or other factors, the marriage of the Kasi princesses to the prince Vichitravirya is not a very viable alternative. The ever-righteous Bhishm himself does them a disservice by treating them as if they were something more than commodities, goods, and trophies that might be bought, traded, or won over. When it comes to a woman who has the belief that "the meaning of life is in the struggle, the fighting," When Satyavati is remembered, she is remembered for her "errors, not her endeavors." She is stomped and crushed. Ganga, the princess of Kasi, and Satyavati are all examples of an instance in which history repeats itself. It is expected of these individuals that they will graciously accept the horrors that have been inflicted against them and endure the consequences of those crimes, while the perpetrator is allowed to go free. They are cornered onto life's edge by fate and by the men around them.

It is the choices that we make in life that determine the course of our lives; if we are deprived of the ability to make choices, then everything is put in jeopardy. Choosing a lady who lives in a society that adheres to all of the many conservative traditions is a challenging task. Even when they are willing to make a decision, the individuals who are surrounding them do not let them to make that decision take place. At this time, women do not have the liberty to exercise according to their own preferences and to gain experience. In her work, Kane has centered her attention on the historical culture and custom that has been exploited to create a barrier around the choice of women. But even in this day and age, women are not given the option to make a decision, and the primary reason for this is that the decisions that women make may be in direct opposition to the norms that are generally accepted.

Women and Education

The function that educated women play in the developing countries is extremely important. A woman has to be able to handle the many challenges that she will encounter during her life with bravery. Contrary to males, women are not permitted to pursue education as a personal goal unless there is a specific reason for doing so. They are limited in what they are able to accomplish as women. Their viewpoint is not taken into consideration when a circumstance arises that requires them to make a decision on what the next step in their life should be. Women are never given the opportunity to develop the abilities and potential that are innate to them. The population of women is more likely to be illiterate and suffer from a lack of information than the population of males. Undeveloped societies, particularly those in rural areas, are experiencing a rapid expansion of this evil culture, particularly in rural areas. Education of women is necessary, not only for the purpose of obtaining healthy occupations and settling down in life, but also for the purpose of reducing the mortality rate, domestic abuse, dowry torture, and other forms of violence against women. The admiration of conservative traditionalism in India contributes to the inferior position of women in comparison to that of males throughout the country. In ancient India, comprehensive education was received from the natural world via the guidance of a guru, which led to the establishment of forest universities. Within the context of Ahalya's Awakening, Ahalya and her brother were given the opportunity to get an education in the ancient Indian traditions at Vashisht Ashrama school. Already at a young age, Ahalya shown evidence of exceptional intelligence and was a quick student. In spite of her desire to relocate to the ashram, she was only given the opportunity to get married. She was not permitted to do so. No amount of pleading could persuade her mother to change her mind about this matter for her. However, because the kingdom was on the verge of being attacked, there was no other option than to transfer Ahalya to the ashram of Rishi Gautam. After that, she was married off to him despite all of the challenges that she faced. Despite the fact that she was married, Ahalya remained fully dedicated to her education. Ahalya is a lady who battles to the very end to achieve her goal of obtaining an education, and this is something that we see throughout her whole life, both in the kingdom and at the ashram. On the other hand, in the example of Satyavati, we can see that she was not highly educated being a woman and being the daughter of a fisherman, but she was schooled to be skilled at managing the boat with her strong sinewy arms. Her ability to make effective use of her skills demonstrates that she possesses a high level of intellect. Later on, when she arrived to the palace of Hastinapur after marrying King Shnatanu, she was accompanied by Kripa, the daughter of a Rishi, who instructed her on the ceremonies and trained her to exhibit all of the traits that a queen ought to exude. Satyavati has always displayed a resolute demeanor in response to any decisions she settles on. When Kripa told Bhishm about Satyavati's brilliance and smartness, she suggested that she is holy to educate her more. This was because Kripa believed that Satyavati may one day use all of the information that she had received against her and the people of Hastinapur, including the king and Bhishm. As a result, we are able to observe that the only paradigm that differentiates Ahalya and Satyavathi is the fact that Ahalya pursued education and knowledge, but Satyavathi made use of the information she already possessed in order to achieve the goals she desired in her life. These individuals did not give up hope despite the many obstacles that stood in the way of their realizing their ambitions. The female characters in Kavita Kane's works are essentially representations of accomplished women who are adamant in their opposition to the preexisting societal conventions.

Social Exclusion of Women

Women all across the world are experiencing a profound existential crisis as a result of social isolation. Based on the findings of the study analysis on the development of women, it is possible that we will observe remarkable advancements as the year progresses. Nevertheless, there are communities that differentiate a woman from involvement in economic, social, and political life. This is due to the fact that the roots of cultural inequality in society are deep and well-established. Exclusion from society is a problem that affects many groups of women all over the world. It is impossible for a woman to construct and expand the world if she does not receive consideration from society. A woman need to be granted the right to participate in both the official and informal aspects of economic functions and activities. What women face is not a deliberate and focused propaganda attack; rather, it is a lack of access to education and appropriate money, which appears to be a kind of subjection on both an emotional and a financial level. It is an issue that has been bothering female liberty for decades, and it is believed to be a concern since it compromises the feeling of dignity that women have. It is cruel to classify a woman and cause her to suffer because of her gender, and social isolation is a weight that women must bear. Women are not permitted to make decisions or to participate in the decision-making process, to have a decent education, to present their views, proposals, and other similar things. In the novel that Kavita Kane has written, the character Ahalya is used to illustrate the social isolation of women. She was not permitted to be aware of the many different things that were occurring to the family, including one that was happening to herself. The members of her family, both deliberately and unknowingly, excluded her from social activities. She was treated as if she were nothing more than an item, and everyone abandoned Ahalya. As a result of the way in which others approached her, she was experiencing feelings of alienation in her life. On the other hand, in the book "The Fisher Queens Dynasty," Satyavati was not even given the opportunity to learn about her identity as the daughter of a king. Denial of a woman's birth right is demonstrated by the fact that her father, King Uparichar Vasu, had abandoned her when she was a newborn. Dashraj was the one who later divulged this information to her after a number of years had passed. Satyavati, the daughter of a fisher chieftain, is forced to marry in order to climb the social ladder. This is done in order to prevent her from achieving her goal. In a same manner, the princesses of Kasi, Amba, Ambika, and Ambalika are kidnapped in order to settle political scores. The women who are members of royal households are evaluated once again based on their capacity to bear children who will succeed to the throne. As a result of confining her identity to her body and denigrating her character, women are not only excluded from their social reality, but they also become bystanders to their own lives. If women are treated in such a manner by society, it is reasonable to anticipate that they may experience feelings of isolation. The power to empower women is something that has to be given to them in our country. A community ought not to view a woman as nothing more than an object to be utilized. It is the field of view regarding a woman in a society that is the change that has to be accomplished; otherwise, a woman must battle on her own until she finally finds satisfaction. Ahalya has fought back against the traditional customs, and despite the fact that she was aware that society was against her, she has not let her mind wander from the choices she has made.

CONCLUSION

Our analysis of Kavita Kane's mythological books has shown, in conclusion, a complex web of female identities and statements that questions canonical accounts and sheds light on hitherto unseen aspects of Hindu mythology's female protagonists. Kane has given voice to historically

underrepresented groups by creatively reimagining classic stories, highlighting the strength, complexity, and agency of these women as they confront patriarchal systems and cultural expectations. Among Kane's most remarkable literary achievements is the way she gives her female heroines agency and humanity, enabling them to go beyond their mythological roots and relate to modern issues and realities. Many of Kane's characters, like Sita in "The Forest of Enchantments," Urmila in "Urmila: The Forgotten Wife," and Menaka in "Menaka's Choice," represent universal human experiences, from longing for independence to overcoming societal constraints. In this examination, we have seen how Kane presents these well-known stories in a new light, giving them more meaning and relevance that addresses the modern challenges of gender, power, and identity. Kane encourages readers to acknowledge the agency and autonomy of women throughout history and to challenge the prevailing narratives that have impacted our understanding of mythology by focusing her narratives on female viewpoints and experiences. Her works have far-reaching consequences for how we comprehend gender, mythology, and the formation of female subjectivity when we consider the ideas and concepts presented in Kane's books. We are invited by Kane's stories to reevaluate the representation and erasure of women in conventional narratives and to envision alternative avenues of resistance, self-expression, and empowerment. When everything is said and done, the mythical books written by Kavita Kane are a strong demonstration of how women's tales and voices continue to shape our shared consciousness. Kane encourages us to recognize the complex and varied aspects of female agency and identity by reclaiming and rewriting these old stories from a female point of view, therefore challenging us to face the prejudices and limits of our own cultural narratives. She does this to show that regular women who have the guts to dream big, rebel, and claim their rightful place in history are just as powerful as the gods and heroes who have the ability to change the course of our tales. Let us find strength in the tales of the strong and independent women depicted by Kavita Kane as we delve further into the complex issues of gender, power, and representation in literature and society. May their stories inspire and uplift future generations.

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