

Gender Sensitization for Sustainability with Special Reference to the Selected Works of Kavita Kane

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Abstract:

Gender sensitization urges to create gender equality issues and modifying the behaviour and views that people hold about themselves and other genders. It is observed that people have personal attitudes and beliefs towards gender equality. The process of gender sensitization helps to promote equality for men and women by allowing them to view what is stereotypical of their gender. The role of men and women in society are inter-linked. Despite being almost equal in number there is a vacuum between them in terms of societal structure, that is hierarchal. Men are to govern the society with their set rules and laws. Ideologically, woman have to accept the so called male dominance, but when it crosses limit and goes unbearable, they are forced to speak out against injustice committed by men in the society. When gender stereotypes are prominent, it is considered the highest levels of feminism. This scenario prevails in our country which can be seen in the past and in some cases to the present context also. Even in our mythology, women are portrayed as a victim of patriarchy, colour and caste discrimination and gender discrimination is prior to all. The paper is an attempt to explore the theme of gender sensitization of marginalized mythological women character in Kavita Kane's novel Karna's Wife: The Outcast's Queen. The whole story of the novel revolves around a marginalized woman Urvi and her struggle to work towards achieving equality for all people. **Keywords:** Gender sensitization, gender-stereotypes, caste discrimination, Kavita Kane, Myth fiction, marginalized women.

Introduction:

The roles of men and women in society are inextricably linked. Despite being almost equal in number, there is a significant gap between them in terms of societal advantages and influence. In a societal structure that is hierarchical, men are in charge of establishing the rules and laws that govern society. Ideologically, women submit to male dominance, but when that dominance goes too far and denies them even the most basic human rights, they are forced to speak out against injustice committed by men. Although stereotype threat effects are more likely to affect women who strongly identify with

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other women, this association between gender identification and higher leadership ambitions may depend on two factors: (1) counter-stereotype salience and (2) feminist identification. Gender sensitization urges to create gender equality issues and modifying the behaviour and views that people hold about themselves and other genders. It is observed that people have personal attitudes and beliefs towards gender equality. The process of gender sensitization helps to promote equality for men and women by allowing them to view what is stereotypical of their gender. As Simone de Beauvoir observes for the women all over the world is rightly applicable even in so called modern societies, "The sphere to which she belongs is everywhere enclosed, limited, dominated by the male universe; high as she may raise herself, far as she may venture, there will always be a ceiling over her head, walls that block her way." Women are everywhere treated as a object who are only meant for subjugation, oppression and suppression. Male are to govern the society and women are only to obey the male domination and this is commonly seen in patriarchal civilizations. Even before her birth, her life and identity are shaped in accordance of the cultural and patriarchal framework. This is most popular in Indian society as Simon de Beauvoir states in *The Second Sex*, "One is not born, but rather becomes a woman." Women's identification should be associated with higher leadership ambitions regardless of feminism when gender counter-stereotypes are prominent, however when gender stereotypes are prominent, women's identification would only be associated with higher levels of feminism. Following the manipulation, we examined leadership ambitions in a fictitious workplace environment. We also measured identification with women and feminism. Leadership ambitions were strongly predicted by the interaction between identification with women, affiliation with feminism, and attention to stereotypes (vs. counter-stereotypes). Regardless of feminist identification, women's identification in the counter-stereotypical state is linked to higher ambitions for leadership. Only at high levels of feminist identification did women's identification in the stereotypical condition predict leadership ambitions. We come to the conclusion that strong feminism identification and salient counter-stereotypes may aid high women identifiers in raising their aspirations for leadership.

Urvi: The Marginalised One

Even in Mythology, Women are portrayed as the victim of patriarchy. The female characters in mythology also suffered from the subjugation causing due to gender and caste. This paper is an attempt to explore the theme of gender sensitization and marginalisation of women in Kavita Kane's novel entitled *Karna's Wife: The Outcast's Queen*. The story of this novel revolves around the marginalised female character Urvi. She is depicted in extensive detail throughout the novel. Kane states in an interview that she had with S. Chakrabarty (2020), "Urvi is fictitious, derived from a Tamil folk lore." She is the daughter of king Vahusha and Queen Shubra, and is blessed with the title of Kshatriya Princess of Pukeya. She was born into this royal family. Urvi feels attracted with Sutaputra, a famous one Karna. When it comes to conclusion, she decides to marry him except his caste obstacle. In this way, it is seen that she brings attention towards the issues of social inequality whether it is

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caste based or high-low status standards of the society. She is portrayed here by the author as an epitome of achieving equality for all people. In the novel she is shown as a powerful feminist heroine who can stand in front of male dominated society and has courage to speak out for her rights and injustice caused by the patriarchal nature of the society. She has ability to raise her voice and breaks the traditional norms and social frictions which seems as barriers in her way of leading a life of her own choices.

Urvi's Personality and Her Daring Assertions:

When we come across the story of the novel, we find that Urvi's personality reveals her daring assertions that are, truth and her battle for equal human rights. Even she is a victim of patriarchy, but she struggles a lot to sustain the power of femininity. It is commonly seen that the way of thinking that is dualistic, hierarchical, and sexualized gives rise to patriarchy and also serves to perpetuate it. Patriarchy is both created by and serves to perpetuate this way of thinking. This way of thinking splits reality into two categories that are diametrically opposed to one another, classifying everything that is experienced as reality as either objects and acts related with nature or things and acts generated by culture. In addition, everything that is included in the category of "culture" is given a higher value, while everything that is connected to nature is given a lower value. "Man" and masculinity become the parameter, model, or paradigm of humanity when men and masculinity are placed in the more valued category of culture, while women and femininity are placed in the less valued category of nature. This justifies the subordination of women on the basis of their alleged inferior "natural roles." Urvi is depicted as an exception for all the above-mentioned views related to patriarchy. She is a brave and determined girl having gentle and compassionate demeanour towards other people. She is not ready to obey the rule of others, even she has her own decision and choice. She faces every situation boldly. As the writer beautifully presented her character as follows: *An heiress to her father's legacy, his intelligence and her mother's flaming beauty.....Though the burning fire in her eyes, the warmth of her smile; and the passion with which she articulated her thoughts were enticing; she was too spirited to be restrained, too proud to be cautious and far too forthright to think of the consequences of her actions.* (8) In the words of Vidhya Vijayan, "Kane presents her as bold and an arrogant woman who is very much efficient in interrogating every false notions, conventional styles and patriarchal rules." It is clear that Urvi stands for the contemporary woman who lives with the cultural rules of our society. She confronts the patriarchal rules and fights against the biased standards of society. In patriarchy, gender roles and stereotypes may vary according to social class, age, and culture; however, through the mechanisms, structures, and institutions that were mentioned earlier, it makes these roles and stereotypes seem natural and universal. Patriarchy is characterized by the idea that men are superior to women in all aspects of life. In any particular patriarchy, not all of the males will hold the same positions of authority or enjoy the same benefits. In point of fact, the historical experience of male dominance over females was used by certain men to extend that dominance over other groups of males, so establishing a hierarchy among men that is more or less

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the same in every culture or location today. But in this novel Urvi emerges as a symbol of force that create a balance between the past and the present era. She is a symbol of bold humanism. The fact that male and female have a connection that can be described as both complimentary and competing is an inherent aspect of human life. The fact is that the paternal social structure predominates everywhere else in the world, with a few maternal subcultures as notable exceptions. Males are placed higher than females in the social hierarchy, and as a result, they have control over the powers and benefits that society bestows upon them.

This unequal connection is articulated quite clearly by Simone de Beauvoir in her writing: *This has always been a man's world... when there are two human categories present, one seeks to force its authority upon the other... If one of the two is in some way superior to the other, if they have some sort of edge over the other, then that one wins and makes it their mission to keep the other one in line. A guy would want to be in charge of a woman.* A relational paradigm that is dominated by men uses the socially sanctioned gender gap as a cunning strategy to maintain their hegemony over women. This strategy is a product of the male-dominated relational paradigm. Women are subject to the arrogant power of men, and securing even the most fundamental of human rights can be an uphill battle for women throughout their lives. Despite this, females do not constitute a single, consistent category; rather, they may be broken down into a great number of distinct subgroups due to the numerous different cultural contexts in which they find themselves. Thus, Kavita Kane depicted the character of Urvi as a bridge between past and the present age, how she stands for the women rights, as she is portrayed in a unique way: *Both the kid's beautiful good features and her father's razor-sharp intelligence shined through during her explosive outbursts of wrath. The fiery daughter had inherited both of her parents' traits from her mother and father. The little princess's outgoing personality, in combination with the genuine compassion she had, was enough to win over anybody and everyone. Even the most stern of the royal patriarchs, Bhishma Pitamaha, did not hesitate for a moment to place her on his lap.....(Karna's Wife, p9).* Urvi's parents do not want her to marry with Sutaputra, because they suffered from caste and patriarchal beliefs. But she has determined to marry Karna in spite of her parent's disapproval of the marriage. Her father continuously threatens her that the society will not allow the marriage of a kshatriya girl with a half-caste. But Urvi is firm on her decision to marry Karna. She struggles against caste system, consequently, her status is replaced from Kshatriya girl to outcast's queen. Urvi works not only to establish her, but retaining her worth in her new family.

Conclusion:

Thus, it is observed that the patriarchy affected the women empowerment many folds, when we went deep into the character of Urvi, we came to know that the female characters in our mythology are suffering from discrimination based on caste and gender. This paper throws a light upon the fact that patriarchal system is still in force. Urvi feels compassion for all the women and raises her voice against patriarchy, and crosses the margin of rigid caste system.

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