
The Influence of Mythological Literature on Revitalizing Reading Habits with reference to select novels of Kavita Kane

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Abstract:

Popular Literature plays a prominent role in reviving reading habits by making books more accessible for wider readers often by focusing on current trends, relatable plots, that reachable for the readers thus motivate them to catch up books more often find the joy of reading it again. The contemporary themes, story, characters, romance and the wide range of categories from thrillers to science fiction enable them to choose the books of their own interest. Mythological and revisionist books also play a significant role in attracting a lot of people to study and conduct research on it. Mythological literature deals with our collective consciousness. They draw motivation from mythology and select popular myth characters. The interesting elements, moral values and the portrayal of characters make the readers captivated. The two epics The Ramayana and the Mahabharata are two main sources of mythological stories along with a few folktales, myths and revisionist stories also have been included.

This paper deals with the role of mythological Literature in reviving the reading habits. The beauty of revisionist texts pulls the readers towards them with its interesting plots and moral values. The two mythological revisionist texts have been chosen which are written by Kavita Kane to analyze how the role of revisionist texts revive the reading habits of people. The syrupy language makes the journey of reading delightful. The readers have welcomed them with their both hands. These books adorned their bookshelves and they never bore the readers.

Keywords: Mythology, Popular Culture, Reading Habits, Revisionist texts

Introduction:

The revisionist texts not only revive the reading habits and also help them to gain knowledge about the stories they have read and heard. *Menaka's Choice* and *Saraswati's Gift* are two wonderful books written by Kavita Kane. *Menaka's Choice* is wonderfully woven story of a

woman. It's a story of separation and love. It deals with unheard voice of apsara called Menaka. The story has been narrated in the point of view of Menaka, she describes her pain, happiness and her lifestyle in Indralok. Infact Indralok is a beautiful place with all the amenities but the sad part of it is apsaras are not at all happy, at the outset they appear to be too beautiful but they are not happy. Their job is to make love, seduce and leave people. They are forbidden to fall in love and to get marry or have children. Menaka's Choice is a such a sad story of a nymph called Menaka herself. The Readers say Kavita Kane has brought life to the character in the novel Menaka's Choice. Menaka has a too little space in mythological fables but Kane analysed her life thoroughly through this novel.

“Kavita Kane's 3rd book Menaka's Choice is one such book which has brought a character to life through her book, who has a little space in the mythological tales”.

The story is a blend of everything, love pain, betrayal, acceptance, rejection, respect, help and responsibility. Whenever people watch these mythological scenes they can co relate with the books they have read. It supports them to keep these things in their memory. The story is very interesting the way the writer brought less known nymph in mythology to a main lead of the novel, which portrays only about her and her character depiction has been done so well. Kane's revisionist writings about mythology in her novels offer readers a fresh and new perspective on old stories. She plunges into the personalities' inward views and emotional state. They are not just stories they have intense social, moral and philosophical meaning attached to it.

Kane uses contemporary language style that makes mythological themes more interesting. It draws the attention of the readers who feel traditional texts are little boring. These texts can also be used in academics to bridge the gap between traditional texts and modern texts to promote educational programs and literacy. Her novels are so popular, it can be adopted for movies, short stories and screenplay, people will definitely enjoy since the plot is very much interesting. Mythological stories often provide emotional catharsis, supports readers to have deeper emotional connection with the stories. This kind of bonding help them to develop their understanding and interest towards mythical folk stories. The fabulous elements of mythological stories improve their imagination skills and shift them to different world all together. Festivals and events centered around mythological literature can ignite the interest in reading. Workshops, seminars, storytelling sessions and theatrical performances draw the attention of the people later they seek for books that inspired them. Mythological and revisionist stories are based on universal themes, such as heroism, sacrifice, redemption and

accomplishments, these themes resonate with the readers can ignite interest among the readers by connecting deeply with human experiences.

Reading Mythological and revisionist stories help people to find their cultural roots and identity, develops their connection with stories and enhances their experiences. Kane's stories revolve around gender roles her strong female characters inspire women readers to face challenges in their life. The interwoven themes such as love, adventure and redemption resonate across culture and community. These mythological stories are rooted in the great epics of The Ramayana and the Mahabharata. The virtues and values of these two epics definitely inspire the people across the globe and irrespective of their culture. The intense imagery and symbolism presented in *Menaka's Choice* and *Saraswati's Gift* allow readers to imaginative interpretation. This help reader to pick up the relatable stories and engage themselves in reading and analyzing the texts. The journey of Kane's female protagonists is remarkable. They eventually grow and transform positively so these characters are torch bearers for women readers as they consider them as ideal women. It helps them for their personal and emotional evolution. This kind of reading habits promote lifelong reading and explore diverse literary stories.

Kane Challenges traditional perspectives by bringing sidelined characters to forefront and supplies voice to the voiceless women by focusing on the themes like empowerment and identity. her story telling is fresh and captivating. Her revisionist works throw deeper reflection on societal norms and values. Kane's texts enable critical thinking among the readers since she questions patriarchal norms and gender roles, it's not just limited to mere reading for entertainment. The mixture of adventure and character development engage readers to experience the journey of reading.

“Apsaras were trained to be
heartless. They did not love: they
loved themselves more. They were
taught to be selfish and pitiless:
They cared for their selves”
(Menaka's Choice: 30)

Menaka, the nymph, is like any other woman, the one wants to be loved and share love to her dear ones, but it's impossible for her, because she is an apsara, they are not supposed to do such things. She wants to get married and have children though she fulfilled her wishes she has to leave all of them because apsara's life itself meant for it. The author nicely blended politics in the plot, which is laudable.

“Heaven does not breed children, only
apsaras to spread love in this everland of
passion and abandon.”

(Menaka’s Choice: 62)

She is ambitious, straightforward, bold lady. She had to take some tough decisions though she didn’t want to that’s why many people blamed for this but her condition was too critical and helpless. Ageless beauty is curse for them and they are martyrs, they don’t die. They have to live with this pain, curse and guilt since they have cheated a lot of people for the sake of Indra, his master. Mythology is timeless, it’s not just about the gods and goddesses. It’s also about their mistakes and accomplishments. The great epic the Mahabharata teaches people that what they are not supposed to do like how Duryodhana lost everything at the end of the Kurukshetra war by following injustice, egoistic attitude and arrogance. On the contrary the great epic the Ramayana guides people to be like Ram, the ideal man, who had followed only virtues and truth throughout his life. Mythological stories are not just interested to read and analyse there are a lot of things to study and adopt in our lives. Kavita Kane states,

“Mythology is not the story of gods but
man and his war with himself and the
world he lives in which is an existential
crisis even today”

Saraswati’s Gift is one more interesting story written by Kavita Kane, which delves into the life of the goddess Saraswati and Brahma. It’s a story of an extraordinary woman and her remarkable journey in Brahmaloak. A few people have made an attempt to write about saraswati, the goddess, it’s one of them. This story provides clear cut picture of goddess Saraswati’s life. Less people know about it. Ma Saraswati is less known Goddess when compare to Goddess Parvati and Lakshmi, among tridevis. Readers have expressed that Kane motivates every reader to sustain balance in our social life like how the goddess Saraswati emphasizes on themes of empowerment and education. Kane’s books not only serve the purpose of entertaining people through its interesting plots also teach the values of life by focusing on solid characters like Menaka and the goddess Saraswati. Through this novel Kane encourages

“Every reader to maintain balance in our
lives, like Saraswati the Goddess herself.
By focusing on the themes of
empowerment and education”.

She is feminine force, Goddess of knowledge and known as a lost river. She is a singular Goddess not as a part of pair, unlike shiva-parvati, Lakshmi-Narayan. In the novel Saraswati

is

shown as the goddess of art, music and knowledge. The story reveals about the marriage between the creator Brahma and Saraswati, it's an unusual bond between two independent minds. Saraswati's character has been portrayed as she is extraordinary woman with high talent and intelligence but her story is buried under myths and legends.

Many a times the reader forgets that they are reading a story of devi Saraswati since the dialogues and characters get humanized. Love, rage, argument and discussion between Brahma and Saraswati feel like the readers are listening to the wedded couples. This is the beauty of Kavita Kane's narrative style. The story line is very interesting that make any reader to fall in love with the novel to revive their reading habits. The blend of fiction and mythology beautifully woven in the works of Kavita Kane. Her talent lies in providing bigger dimension to the minor characters, she makes those characters speak for themselves. People have read the two epics The Ramayana and the Mahabharata in the perception of men however Kane does it vice versa she sees through women characters so this aspect makes people to relook at this two epics and women readers are more elated to read these books as women characters are protagonists and representatives of women world since they share same kind of story likewise common women folk.

“You are most precious to me,’ he said
suddenly with a catch in his voice.
Only you can say that and make me believe
it! She smiled.” (Saraswati's Gift: 242)

It's a known fact that many people are unaware of it. Devi Saraswati is not a keen supporter of the idea of motherhood and marriage, she believed in having other ideas in life. There are many women like her in the present society who want to pursue their career unless opt for marriage and children. This novel is readable because it brings for the world of divinities to a human surface.

“I've never wanted children, for as long as
I can remember. I told myself that I was
making the decision then and there”.
(Saraswati's Gift :290)

Due to the emergence of smart phones and social media, reading habits of youngsters are declining, digital media diverts their attention away from traditional book reading and also curbs their creative and analytical skills but popular culture helps them to revive their reading habits since it is a catchy and easy to comprehend. In addition to this mythological and revisionist texts grab the attention of the readers with its interesting plots and characters. Moreover, people will get a chance to peek into our puranas, epics and great stories of divinities and also it's a great opportunity for them to get to know the story and same they can tell to their children.

Kavita Kane's novels often reaffirms famous mythological stories, with her new perspectives, she transfers focus from male protagonists to women who were behind them. Whether its Karna's wife, *Menaka's Choice* or *Saraswati's Gift*, this reimagining not only pleases the readers also they wish to explore the original texts for better understanding, they compare and contrast with the plots which amuse them since there is a voice provided to voiceless women characters in Kane's works. She has researched very keenly about different mythological stories and read a lot of books related to many characters before penning down in her books. She had read the stories which passed from generation to generation which supported her to delve in to the world of powerful women characters and to write revisionist texts based on her own understanding and imagination.

Conclusion:

Kane blends old texts with current issues for ex. Empowerment, education, identity and freedom. Young readers find it interesting because women were struggling for above said things and they are struggling even today, it's not an irrelevant story, there is a connection and they find it relevant and enjoy reading. Her novels functions as a bridge between ancient and new culture. The connection which she has built with current trend through her mythological fiction makes readers to feel proud about their cultural heritage and reignites reading habits since many young readers fail to have connection with their traditional works. Her women characters are very strong and complex, many of her women protagonists are ideal for young readers since they showcase braveness, honesty and wisdom. Kane added a layer of complexity and blended with modern sensibilities. This emotional connection supports many readers to grab these books which inspire them a most. Kane's novels attract huge reading community irrespective of their age groups from young readers to old readers and new readers too. She is promoting reading habits of people since she is a popular writer and people want to explore same genre and themes as there are many more writers like Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Amish Thripati and Devdutt Patnaik write about mythological tales. Book club events, literary fests and discussions that based on mythological stories influence the reading habits of the people.

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