

# Character of Surpankha: A Journey of Marginalized Woman

Dr. Aruna Sharma

**Abstract:** Lanka's princess offers a new look at an epic from the prospective of a female protagonist who is neglected in the main epic, Lanka's princess is the story and journey of Meenakshi to the making of Surpankha and demon girl simmering with the fuel of fury and thus became the cause of destruction of Ravana and his entire race, proved her strengths more prominent her demon self becomes more dominant and her negativity, frustration made her personality worst and more inclined to vices rather than virtues.

**Keywords:** Marginalization, Neglected, Overshadowed, Marking of Surpankha

In the series of novel of Kavita Kane, she made a debut by making side lined characters as the Protagonists of her novels and created a world or platform for voicing the voiceless endless glowing of these lesser known characters. In "Sita's Sister" as the title indicates Sita's sisters lost identity and eradication of her important character and role, she is voiced by Kavita Kane and an important place was given to her with her own perspective. Extensive and breath taking epic like "Ramayana" is written from the point of view of man and their look out, her identity was confined only as Sita's sister overshadowed by Sita. Kavita Kane never sung the songs of celebrities of epics, but like Chitra Bannerji. Anita Desai she brought the qualities of overshadowed characters into limelight where being the sister of 'Sita' become a jeopardy of her, about where she goes unheeded neglected and frustrated one who suffered without any fault of her.

After the winning success of Sita's sister she brought another forgotten character, once again Karna's wife. An outcast queen "Uruvi" whose entire existence was smitten into Karna's personality and depicts the attitude of society towards women as if she has no identity except being the wife of someone or queen of outcast, which embraces the tale of all her sufferings and agony, despite it she showed and proved her matter.

Once again history is re interpreted from the perspective of those characters who suffered and have no glimpses in the entire epic of Ramayan. With the advent of post modernism, era women came forward and gave sturdy a backbone to the limping characters who are insecure, unsupported and left alone during suffering. This world was of the women for the woman by the woman. She exposed the follies of history committed by man and thus fulfilled the need of the time, by creating a bond of sisterhood and provided an opportunity to speak and let the world listen.

Like all of Kavita Kane's work, "Lanka's princess" also offered a new look at an epic from the perspective of a female protagonist who is neglected and sketched as an epitome of negativity nobody tried to look into the journey of conversion of Meenakshi into Shuparnakha. The journey of a woman, neglected by mother just after birth, overshadowed by male dominated society, her own three brothers, she was lost into dark as the title of the novel

indicates she was princess as she was a daughter of a king and sister of Princes but no right, no identity, criticism, deceit and humiliation become the another name of her, The name which was given to her was the girl who has got the eyes fish shaped, a girl who tried to find love throughout her life but then it became demon woman who caused the destruction.

Surpankha-the one with sharp claw like nail was born out of distorted Meenakshi. A girl with dusky colour she became a demon woman by her revengeful attitude towards everyone who so ever deserted her that may be her mother who rejected her due to her ugliness taken as useless thing, or her brothers who made her husband killed and her brothers who made her husband killed and her son whom she loved a lot was also killed mercilessly and she was made a tool of conspiracy because Ravana was afraid due to asstance of her share in Kingdom, he rooted out these in the binging only, or Kumbhakaran of Vibhishan who couldn't support her due to the the fear of eldest brother 'Ravana' who may banish them out of kingdom. She is deprived of her husband who was killed by her own brothers only. We see the events those finally rose out the simmering anger and bitterness, small incidents and experiences, kept her feeling an inner fury towards Ravana, Kumbhakaran and Vibhishan. Meenakshi was born in a family no stranger to war and dark secrets and all her probabilities at a happy life were curtailed, every time her driving into a dark corner where only hatred, revenge and spite engulf her soul. The way these circumstances moulded her character and prepare her for her role in the battle between Ram and Ravan, are very interesting and breath taking to watch unfold.

The transformation of kind and compassionate princess Meenakshi into rude rough and revengeful demon woman Surpankha is heart breaking to follow and gives a well-founded depth to her character which compels us to sympathise with this deeply hit villainous protagonist.

Despite being a retelling of this mythological epic, the story handles over contemporary social yet sensitive issues with profound space and understanding. This reveals that one has to realize the partial and biased attitude ever in the royal families and gender discrimination caused insecurity based on looks and skin colour, honour killing etc. Sexual violence and social labours were also prevalent in royal families as well as in

common families. The authoress tackles and focuses on this fact that mal practices were also very prevalent at the time of Shri Ram, so called Ram Rajya she weaves these facts into the narrative and the whole story is not based on one issue but accumulation of all such issues which may feed negativity in the so called sensitive character.

For revenge, even at the cost of those few one those Surpankha loved one can see her set into motion the events that finally lead to Lanka's war and downfall of her entire race. Every character is well developed and got the deserved space. The best story is where the readers are influenced by the psyche of character. Its inherent dark nature need to be in the readers also to read this. We attenuate between sympathy with Meenakshi and disgusted with her inherent assure nature, which brings out the worst in those around her.

Kavita Kane is an established name in terms of retelling Indian mythological character. One can only appreciate her confidence to make the choice of retelling of well accepted epic "Ramayana", the exploits of the Prince of Ayodhya and his nimesis the King of Lanka.

This is noteworthy that Surpankha name was also given by her aggressive brothers, whose back she scratched in anger with her long claw like nails. She is depicted in epic as brazen and deformed demonic figure a character in which readers were unable to peep into her personality where in her demonic body, a sensitive loving heart lurking which craved for her loved one Woman is not born, she is made by society For most, she is responsible for manipulating the events and proved an anger and revenge of woman on root out the entire clean and family of her own brother.

"Kavita Kane says: "Society has always ridiculed her. We take her role in Ramayana so tightly where she is in fact she is such a crucial cheater and then she has been sidelined through the rest of the epic whereas her brother. Ravana is more fleshed out. I wanted to humanize her and make her real to people.

She concludes by saying that she is not justifying the character of Ravana or Surpankha in her book. I am not saying that they were heroes they were people with flaw that's the beauty of menology. Every character has shade of grey that make you think and quest.

## References

Kavitakane: Lanka's Princes, 2017, Rupa Publication, India