



**Unheard voice of Mythological character- Uruvi in Kavita Kane's Karna's Wife**

**Mr.A.Kumar\*<sup>1</sup>**

Research Scholar (Part Time)  
Assistant Professor, Dept. of English  
Government.Arts College,  
Nannilam

**Dr.D.Prasad\*<sup>2</sup>**

Research Supervisor ,  
Government .Arts College,  
Kumbakonam

[Kumaranbu25@gmail.co m](mailto:Kumaranbu25@gmail.co m)

9865422074

**APA Citation:**

A.Kumar (2025). Unheard voice of Mythological character- Uruvi in Kavita Kane's Karna's Wife, Journal of Indian Languages and Indian literature in English, 03(02),38-42; 2025

**Submission Date:**16.03.25

**Acceptance Date:**24.03.25

---

**Abstract**

Indian mythology is deeply embedded in the lives of the Indian populace, as the narratives from these myths significantly influence individual identities and social values through their moral teachings. These mythological stories are rich in cultural heritage. Indian literature is abundant with mythological themes drawn from classical epics such as the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. The resurgence of literary interest offers a fresh perspective on these myths, allowing them to be re-examined, reinterpreted, retold, and adapted to various contexts. Kavita Kane is a prominent author known for her retellings of Indian mythology. In her work “Karna’s Wife”, Kane presents the Mahabharata from the viewpoint of Uruvi.

This paper aims to illuminate the often a neglected figure of Uruvi, the princess of Pukeya, plays a crucial role in Kavita Kane's "Karna's Wife: The Outcast's Queen." Through her character, Kane delves into themes of love, loyalty, and self-identity, providing a novel viewpoint on the Mahabharata.

**Key Words:** Indian Writing, Mythology, retelling, Mahabharata, Feminism, Marginalization

### **Unheard voice of Mythological character- Uruvi in Kavita Kane's Karna's Wife**

In the last decade Indian Mythology has crossed the boundary from being limited to literati, to being a part of popular fiction reads. This has been made by a spate of authors who have made mythology interesting for the masses. The stories of epics like Ramayana and Mahabharata never fail to fascinate us. These are a much familiar topic to the people of India. According to Pattanaik, “if myth is an idea, mythology is the vehicle of that idea. Mythology constitutes stories, symbols and rituals that make a myth tangible”.

In the words of Kavita Kane on Mythology, “I am huge fan of mythology as well as mythological fiction. I love to know all the unknown stories that is not mentioned in the main text, but are folklore or added in some of the regional or different language versions of it. And I love to read mythology from different point view”.

India has had a rich tradition of recreating and retelling its myths and legend. Most of the popular mythologies, particularly Ramayana and Mahabharata, are recreated and retellings these days. Amish Tripathi, Anand Neelakandan, Patnaik, Chitra Divakaruni and Kavita Kane are popular Retellers in India. They use many sources for their stories and access many texts, often with the help of other scholars. They pick an angle from which they want to tell their stories. Some speak from the point of view of the main characters and some from the minor characters. Some authors speak from the perspective of women characters that have been silenced.

Kavita Kane is widely recognized for highlighting the often-overlooked female figures in Indian mythology. Her novels focus on women-centric narratives that explore the lives of lesser-known mythological characters, addressing issues that remain pertinent in contemporary society. Each of her works serves as a feminist reinterpretation of Indian mythology, showcasing the stories of powerful yet forgotten women. To date, she has authored seven novels, each offering a fresh perspective on Indian epics through the eyes of her female protagonists. This paper aims to analyze "Karna's Wife" by Kavita Kane, specifically examining the character of Uruvi, who has been marginalized in traditional narratives, and to explore the author's efforts to rectify this oversight.

Karna's Wife reinterprets the tale of Uruvi, a relatively obscure figure from the Mahabharata. The novel depicts Uruvi as a bold princess who challenges societal expectations by choosing to marry Karna, a warrior marginalized by society. Set against the backdrop of the Kurukshetra War, the story delves into Uruvi's emotional turmoil and her influence on Karna, uncovering his vulnerabilities and the intricacies of his social standing. Kane highlights Uruvi's strength, resilience, and defiance of traditional gender roles, providing a layered representation that questions established stereotypes.

A particularly notable feature of Uruvi's character is her sense of agency and independence. In contrast to many female figures in the Mahabharata, Uruvi is portrayed as a determined and self-sufficient individual who exercises her own judgment. Her choice to marry Karna, despite his humble origins, exemplifies her bravery and strong convictions.

Uruvi's decision to marry Karna, a Suta Putra, despite being a princess, showcases her bold and unconventional spirit, defying the societal norms of her time. In contrast to Draupadi, often regarded as a central character, Uruvi's choices demonstrate a remarkable independence and self-determination, unencumbered by the influence of a powerful male figure. Uruvi's actions reveal her astute understanding of the societal dynamics at play, as she knowingly accepts the potential disapproval that comes with marrying outside her caste. Moreover, her insightful observation that Karna is "not the wrong man, but the wronged man" underscores her ability to see beyond societal expectations and empathize with the complexities of Karna's situation.

The relationship between Uruvi and Karna is also significant. Kane depicts their love as profound and enduring, founded on mutual respect and trust. Uruvi's steadfast support for Karna, regardless of his social standing, offers a compelling examination of the intricacies of love and loyalty.

Uruvi emerges as a voice of wisdom and reason, offering a nuanced perspective that resonates with the audience. Through her astute observations and analyses, she reveals that Karna's decisions were motivated not solely by his resentment towards the Pandavas, but also by his deep sense of loyalty and obligation to his friend, Duryodhana, who had stood by him in times of need. "I will always stand by him, whoever and whatever I am against. Duryodhana gave me kingdom without asking me for it and I shall give him my undying friendship in return. I promised him I shall serve him till my last breath and I am committed to him for life." (P, 86).

Moreover, Uruvi's character acts as a counterpoint to the more conventional female figures in the Mahabharata, such as Draupadi and Kunti. While these characters often represent traditional feminine ideals, Uruvi challenges these norms. Her assertiveness, intellect, and resolve render her a captivating and relatable figure.

Uruvi, a young woman in love, saw beyond Karna's flaws and societal rejections, and was drawn to his heroic qualities. Despite being belittled and ostracized by royalty and society due to his lowly birth, Uruvi found Karna's noble warrior spirit and kindness irresistible, making it easy for her to fall in love with him despite his being deemed an unsuitable suitor.

Whenever Karna's insecurities and frustrations about his lowly birth as a Suta Putra surfaced, Uruvi proved to be an exemplary partner, offering solace and reassurance to calm his troubled mind. She consoles him and says,

"A 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).

Through Uruvi, Kane delves into the complex character of Karna. Abandoned by his biological mother and stripped of his rights and dignity due to the low status of his adoptive parents, Karna has faced numerous hardships throughout his life. This tumultuous background compels him to pledge unwavering loyalty to Duryodhana, despite recognizing the latter's alignment with malevolence. Duryodhana was the only individual who treated Karna with respect during a fateful archery competition, even bestowing upon him the title of King of Anga and declaring him an equal, akin to a brother. This act restored the dignity

that Karna had long been denied. Although Uruvi harbors disdain for the bond between the two, fearing it may ultimately lead to Karna's demise, she gradually comes to understand that Duryodhana's feelings for Karna are genuine and rooted in respect. As noted by Bhanumati, Duryodhana's friendship with Karna stands as the sole act of goodness and selflessness in his life. Kane's portrayal of Duryodhana's affection for Karna and his sorrow over his friend's death adds a layer of humanity to Duryodhana that surpasses any previous interpretations.

Nevertheless, some critics might contend that Uruvi's character is excessively idealized, particularly in her romantic involvement with Karna. Additionally, her privileged upbringing and royal lineage may raise concerns for some readers, especially when juxtaposed with Karna's modest background.

What captivates me about Kane's works is her portrayal of women within these epic narratives. While the Ramayana and Mahabharata predominantly emphasize male characters, Kane endeavors to illuminate the lives of the lesser-known women who exist in the shadows of these men, narrating these familiar stories from their viewpoints. In this context, we encounter Uruvi, a spirited, intelligent, and eloquent woman who serves as Karna's moral compass. Her interactions with other female characters are noteworthy, such as the complex yet understanding dynamic she shares with Vrushali, Karna's first wife, and the tentative camaraderie with Bhanumati. Additionally, the maternal bond between Kunti and Uruvi evolves into deep animosity from Uruvi towards Kunti upon the revelation of Karna's true lineage. Perhaps the most intriguing aspect is Uruvi's relationship with Draupadi, another woman who harbors a secret love for Karna. The range of emotions Uruvi experiences towards Draupadi—jealousy, admiration, respect, and sympathy—adds depth to the narrative. Through this novel, Kane once again demonstrates her remarkable ability to capture the complexities of a woman's psyche.

The bond shared between Karna and Uruvi is simultaneously exquisite and tragic. The scene that resonated with me the most, surpassing all other poignant moments, was their initial dialogue. His hesitant approach, questioning whether she was coerced or compelled into their marriage, reveals his deep-seated insecurities. He struggles to comprehend that someone of Uruvi's caliber could genuinely love him. Kane skillfully navigates the evolution of their relationship, capturing

the journey from the initial sparks of affection to a profound mutual understanding, ultimately culminating in a soul-mate connection.

Uruvi, is portrayed as a symbol of courage, displaying noble qualities of the Mahabharata era. Her bravery is evident in her unconventional marriage to Karna, her defiance of Duryodhan, and her bold confrontation of royal women who scorn her. While some aspects of her portrayal may seem anachronistic, her character is largely historically grounded. Uruvi's courage continues to inspire individuals in modern society, making her a compelling and admirable figure. The novel presents the character of Uruvi as a complex and engaging exploration of female agency, love, and identity. Through Uruvi's journey, Kane provides a refreshing and thought-provoking interpretation of the Mahabharata.

Uruvi's journey concludes with her transformation from a young, idealistic woman to a strong, independent individual. She navigates love, loyalty, and societal expectations as Karna's wife, ultimately finding peace and embracing her identity beyond her marriage. Uruvi rises above her assigned roles, asserting her strength and wisdom, and reclaims her agency, becoming a woman in her own right, celebrated for her resilience and intelligence.

## **WORKS CITED**

- Kane, Kavita. *Karna's Wife*. India: Rupa Publication, 2013, Print.
- Manal, Naila. "The Unsung Heroine". <http://www.goodreads.com/web.01> oct.2020.pp
- Pattanaik, Devdutt. "Myth=Mithya Decoding Hindu Mythology", Penguin Books, 2006  
<https://talesntunes.wordpress.com/2018/12/07/book-review-karnas-wife-by-kavita-kane/>