

Tracing the Unheard Female Voices in Ramayana with Reference to Kavita Kane's *Lanka's*

Princess and Sita's Sister

By

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Declaración

DECLARATION

I do hereby declare that the dissertation entitled “**Tracing the Unheard Female Voices in Ramayana with Reference to Kavita Kane’s *Lanka’s Princess and Sita’s Sister***” submitted by **Vishal L** for the degree of Master of Arts (M.A.) in English is a record of work carried out during the period from December 2022 – May 2023 under the guidance of **Mrs.K.Usha Savithiri (MA., B.Ed, M.Phil., (Ph.D))** Assistant Professor, Department of English, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women (SF), Coimbatore, and, has not formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Associateship, Fellowship or similar Titles in this University or any other University or other similar Institutions of Higher Learning.

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This is to certify that the dissertation entitled “**Tracing the Unheard Female Voices in Ramayana with Reference to Kavita Kane’s *Lanka’s Princess and Sita’s Sister***” submitted to Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women (S.F), Coimbatore, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Arts (M.A.)**, is a dissertation carried out by **Vishali L.** during the period of her study from December 2022 – May 2023 in Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women (S.F), Coimbatore, under the guidance of **Mrs.K.Usha Savithiri** (MA., B.Ed, M.Phil., (Ph.D).) Assistant Professor, Department of English, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women (S.F), Coimbatore, and, has not formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Associateship, Fellowship or similar Titles in this University or any other University or other similar Institutions of Higher Learning.

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ABSTRACT

Since we have been studying the Ramayana and the Mahabharata for so many years, we have concluded that men are the gods who fought for dharma. Women were not taken into account. The status of women remains unchanged from the beginning of humankind to the present, and even in the great epics like the Ramayana, she is shown as the silent self-sufferer from the womb to the grave. Legendary tales are often retold by Kavita Kane. She writes about the women in the Ramayana and Mahabarath who were overlooked by us. In her novel, Kavita Kane explores various viewpoints on women.

In Lanka's Princess she specifically discusses about Surpanakha and prompts us to consider whether or not she was the cause of Lanka's destruction. It makes an effort to analyse how she struggles while trapped in an androcentric environment. In order to reinterpret her femininity, it dissects her identities as a daughter, sister, wife, and more particularly, as a person, tracing the development of her own self-perception. This novel is narrated in Surpanakha's perspective.

In Sita's Sister Kavita describes about Urmila's agony after her husband abandons her in the palace and goes into exile for 14 years. Urmila's sacrifice, as Kane has said, was the most compelling element of her life, but it definitely deprives Urmila of the multi-dimensionality that was clearly provided as the heroine. Urmila's life was all about sacrifice, which makes her appear to be a weak, docile lady who was expected to remain at home for fourteen years while studying or sleeping. We'll be witnessing through the viewpoint of these two overrated characters from the Ramayana.

Notes

Abbreviations

LP – Lanka's Princess

SS – Sita's Sister

Chapter I

Introduction

The purpose of literature is to turn blood into ink – T.S.Eliot

The term literature has historically been used to refer to imaginative poems and short stories that are characterised by the authors' goals and the reader's perception of the authors' aesthetic perfection. A number of methods, including language, national origin, historical era, genre, and topic matter, can be used to categorise literature. Literature, which derives from the Latin *littera*, 'a letter of the alphabet,' is first and foremost the body of writing produced by humankind as a whole, followed by the body of writing produced by a particular language or group of people, and finally individual works of writing. The term has historically been used to refer to imaginative poems and short stories that are characterized by the authors' goals and the reader's perception of the authors' aesthetic perfection. A number of methods, including language, national origin, historical era, genre, and topic matter, can be used to categorise literature.

A form of human expression is literature. But not all verbal expression, even when planned out and recorded, qualifies as literature. Most, but not all, critics would consider publications that are primarily instructional, academic, or journalistic to be below the level of literature. However, some types of writing are universally acknowledged as belonging to literature as an art. Individual endeavours within these forms are deemed successful if they have what is referred to as artistic merit and unsuccessful if they do not. It is simpler to recognise creative excellence than to define it. To get there, the writers need to even attempt. On the other hand, a dull poem might have little literary worth at all whereas a scientific presentation might

have considerable literary value. See the pages on African literature, African theatre, Oceanic literature, Western literature, Central Asian arts, South Asian arts, and Southeast Asian arts for a historical analysis of distinct literary genres within specific geographic areas. Some literary genres such as Arabic, Celtic, Latin, French, Japanese, and Biblical are studied independently depending on their language, country of origin, or particular subject.

The essay was originally purposefully created as a work of literature since its subject matter was a little trivial. Though there are still essayists who write in the great tradition who see themselves as artists, the majority of essays are now written as explanatory, instructive journalism. As in the past, critics of literature, drama, and the arts are some of the best essayists today.

Some personal writings, such as autobiographies, diaries, memoirs, and letters, are among the best works of literature ever written. Examples of this biographical literature range from those written with the intention of being preserved to those written with no regard to anyone but the author reading them. Others, written in a privately developed language, gain their status as literature because of their cogency, insight, depth, and scope. Some are in a highly polished literary style.

Numerous philosophical writings are considered literary works. The Meditations of the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius from the second century are a collection of seemingly unrelated thoughts, and the Greek in which they are written is unique. *The Dialogues of Plato* from the fourth century BC are written with tremendous narrative talent and in the greatest writing. However, whereas the theories of other philosophers, both ancient and modern, are not, both are classified as literature. Even after their scientific content has become old, some

scientific publications continue to be read as literature. This is especially true for natural history texts, where the component of firsthand experience plays a significant role. *Gilbert White's Natural History and Antiquities of Selbourne* (1789) is a great illustration.

Sanskrit, Prakrit, Pali, Bengali, Bihari, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Malayalam, Oriya, Punjabi, Rajasthani, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, Lahnda, Siraiki, and Sindhi are just a few of the vernacular languages used in the production of Indian literature, which also includes writings in English. Here, the word 'Indian literature' refers to works written both inside and outside the Republic of India, both before and after 1947, on the entire Indian subcontinent. The Veda, which are the canonical Hindu sacred books and were composed in Sanskrit, are considered to be the earliest works of Indian literature. The *Brahmanas* and the *Upanishads* are two examples of prose commentary that were added to the Veda.

Sanskrit literature was written between approximately 1500 BCE and 1000 CE, reaching its height of development between the first and seventh century CE. In addition to religious and philosophical texts, other genres like court poetry, dramas, and narrative folktales also developed. Buddhism and Jainism adopted other literary languages (Pali and Ardhamagadhi, respectively) since Sanskrit was associated with the Brahminical religion of the Vedas. The prototype languages of northern India were developed from these and other similar languages.

The Mahabharata and Ramayana, two epic works written in Sanskrit, as well as the Bhavata-purna and other Puranas, served as major influences on the literature of those languages. Additionally, Sanskrit schools of rhetoric played a significant role in the formation of court poetry in many contemporary literatures, and Sanskrit philosophies served as the inspiration for philosophical writing in later literatures. Tamil, a language of South India, deviates from this

pattern of Sanskrit influence because it has its own classical tradition. Additionally, Urdu and Sindhi are exceptions.

Western literary traditions began to influence Indian literature in the 19th century, especially at the height of British rule over the subcontinent. The most notable outcome was the widespread introduction of vernacular prose. Indian authors started embracing genres including the novel and short story, as well as realism, a fascination with social issues, and psychological depiction. Additionally, the subcontinent developed an English literary tradition.

A novel or short tales are examples of literary works that rely on imagination rather than actuality. Since fiction is created in the mind, the Latin term *fictus*, which meaning ‘to form,’ looks like a good origin for the English word fiction. However, fiction has a slightly darker extra meaning: a purposeful deception or deceit, much like its literary cousins fable, legend, and myth. The distinction between truth and lies is what we mean when we discuss ‘the line between fact and fiction.’

fictional representations are at odds with reality, history, or plausibility. Traditionally, the term ‘fiction’ has been used to refer only to written tales in prose, particularly novels, novellas, and short stories. However, fiction is more widely defined as imagined stories that are presented in any form, including writing, live theatre, movies, television shows, radio dramas, comic books, role-playing games, and video games. The functionality of a work is typically advertised publicly, so the audience expects the work to differ in some ways from reality instead of, for example, solely presenting factually accurate portrayals or characters who are real persons. The themes and setting of a work, including whether or not it refers to real-world concerns or occurrences, are subject to interpretation because fiction is typically recognised to not fully

adhere to the real world. Some fictional works even allow for the possibility of characters and events existing in their own independent fictional universe, which is utterly distinct from the known physical universe.

Authors of non-fiction assume the burden of giving just knowledge and, occasionally, opinion based on historical and factual realities, in contrast to fiction. Despite the traditional division between fiction and non-fiction, some contemporary works blur this line, particularly those that belong to certain experimental storytelling genres, such as some postmodern-fiction, auto-fiction, or creative-nonfiction like non-fiction novels and docudramas, as well as the intentional literary fraud of mislabeling fiction as non-fiction.

Mythology is the study and interpretation of myths, which are frequently sacred tales or fables of a culture. Mythologies are a collection of such tales that address a variety of issues related to the human condition, including good and evil, the meaning of suffering, human origins, the origins of place-names, animals, cultural values, and traditions, the meaning of life and death, the afterlife, and celestial tales of the gods or a god. A particular culture's views and ideals on these ideas are expressed in myths. Every civilisation on earth has benefited greatly from mythology.

Prehistoric cave paintings, stone carvings, tombs, and monuments all indicate that people had already constructed a belief structure that corresponded to the description of "myth" given by Leach and Fried long before they put their beliefs into words. The twentieth-century psychiatrist Carl Jung believed that myth is an essential component of the human psyche that wants to find meaning and order in a world that frequently appears to be chaotic and meaningless.

It should be kept in mind that what is now referred to as 'mythology' was actually the ancient peoples' religion. The stories that make up the body of ancient mythology served the same function for the people who lived in those times as the stories from canonical scripture do for people today: they clarified, consoled, and guided an audience while also fostering a sense of community, cohesion, and safety among like-minded believers.

Hindu mythology is the collection of stories and writings attributed to and promoted by followers of the Hindu religion. These stories and writings can be found in texts written in Sanskrit, including the Vedic literature, the Mahabharata and Ramayana, the Puranas, and myths particular to a particular ethnic or linguistic group, such as the *Tamil Periya Puranam* and *Divya Prabandham*, as well as the *Bengali Mangal Kavya*. Hindu mythology can also be found in popular literature that has been widely translated, such as Southeast Asian writings and the stories of the Panchatantra and the Hitopadesha. Academic studies of mythology frequently characterise mythology as highly regarded tales that explain a society's existence and the natural world, such as tales of a society's inception, its foundations, its god(s), its founding figures, and its relationship to the natural world.

The Greek word *mythos*, from which the English word *myth* is derived, meaning story, narrative in classical Greek. Hindu mythology frequently lacks a rigid, unchanging framework. Usually, the same myth is told in several different ways, and it can be interpreted differently according to regional and socio religious traditions. Many of these legends develop throughout these writings, changing character names or adding more elements to the plot. Suthren Hirst asserts that a wide variety of sophisticated interpretations have been given to these myths. Doniger O'Flaherty contends that the moral principles and main message are unchanged. They

have been altered over time by different philosophical schools and are thought to have deeper, frequently symbolic, meaning.

Here are some Indian mythological writers:

Amish Tripathi is a diplomat and writer from India. His Ram Chandra Series and Shiva Trilogy are his two best-known works. Amish Tripathi is a pro at writing mythological fiction. Since 2010, more than 6 million copies of Amish's books have been sold in the Indian subcontinent. *The Immortals of Meluha*, Tripathi's first novel and first in the Shiva Trilogy, was published in February 2010. The second book in the series, *The Secret of the Nagas*, was released in August 2011, and the third and final installment, titled *The Oath of the Vayuputras*, was released in February 2013.

In June 2015, *The Scion of Ikshvaku* was published. It is the initial installment in the Ram Chandra series. It is a precursor to the Shiva Trilogy and continues the story of Ram. The follow-up to *The Scion of Ikshvaku*, *Sita: Warrior of Mithila*, was published in May 2017. It ended up being the best-selling book of the year. The third book in the Ram Chandra series, *Raavan: The Enemy of Aryavarta*, was published in July 2019. *War of Lanka*, the fourth book in The Ram Chandra Series, was published on October 3, 2022. In June 2020, he published *Legend of Suheldev: The King Who Saved India*, the first volume of his Indic Chronicles and first historical novel.

Immortal India, Tripathi's debut nonfiction book, was published in August 2017. In December 2020, he also published *Dharma: Decoding the Epics for a Meaningful Life*. Nine regional languages, including Hindi, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, and Kannada, as well as four international languages, including French and Polish, have been used in the translation of Tripathi's literary works.

Anand Neelakantan is an Indian novelist, pundit, scriptwriter, and public speaker. Twelve books in English and one in Malayalam have been written by this author, who is noted for his work in mythological fiction. The editors of Amazon novels included his first book, *Asura: Tale of the Vanquished*, on their list of "100 books by Indian authors to read in a lifetime." His second book, the second of a two-volume series, was an interpretation of the Mahabharata from the viewpoint of Kaurava. Released in December 2013 was *Ajaya: Roll of the Dice*, then in July 2015 came *Ajaya: Rise of Kali*.

The official prequel novels for the Baahubali film series were written by Anand Neelakantan. The three-book series, *Bahubali: Before the Beginning*, serves as a prelude to the films. *The Rise of Sivagami*, the first book in the series, was published on March 15, 2017. *Chaturanga*, the second book in the collection, was published on August 6, 2020. On December 28, 2020, the third book, *Queen of Mahishmathi*, was published. On March 20, 2023, his most recent novel, *The Tale of the Naughty Flying Mountains*, was published. On April 24, 2023, he published his next book, *Nala Damayanti: An Eternal Tale From The Mahabharata*.

Pattanaik writes columns for Mid-Day, Times of India, CN Traveller, Daily O, and Scroll.in. In his leisure time, he wrote mythology-related books and articles, which he later turned into his full-time job. In 1997, his debut book *Shiva: An Introduction* was released. Most of Pattanaik's books feature his own illustrations.

In *Shiva to Shankara: Giving Form to the Formless*, Pattanaik explains how the Goddess changed Shiva, the recluse, into Shankara, the householder, and the several levels of significance that are ingrained in Shiva's linga. Mythology is contextualised in *Culture: 50 Insights from*

Mythology, which makes the argument that myths are alive, dynamic, and influenced by perception and the times we live in.

Some of his famous books are *My Gita* (2015), *Jaya* (2010), *Myth=Mithya* (2006), *7 Secrets of Shiva: From the Hindu Trinity Series* (2011), *Sita: An illustrated retelling of Ramayana* (2013), *The Pregnant King* (2008), *Olympus* (2016), *Indian Mythology: Tales, Symbols, and Rituals from the Heart of the Subcontinent* (2003), *Yoga Mythology: 64 Asanas and Their Stories* (2019), *My Hanuman Chalisa* (2017), *Culture: 50 Insights from Mythology* (2017).

Anuja Chandramouli writes fantasy and historical fiction. Her stories frequently have heroes from Indian mythology. *Yama's Lieutenant* and its follow-up, *Yama's Lieutenant and the Stone Witch*, are two of her high fantasy works. In 2012, her first book, *Arjuna: Saga of a Pandava Warrior Prince*, was released.

Three of her books, *Kamadeva: The God of Desire*, *Shakti: The Divine Feminine*, and *Arjuna: Saga of a Pandava Warrior Prince*, will be translated. Rani Padmavati, an Indian queen who ruled in the 13th and 14th centuries, is the subject of her 2017 book *The Burning Queen*, which is based on an epic poem by Malik Muhammad Jayasi. It was released during the controversy surrounding Sanjay Leela Bhansali's *Padmaavat*. In 2018, the author's book *Ganga: The Constant Goddess* was released. The most recent book, *Mohini: The Enchantress*, was published in August 2020.

Abhimanyu: Son of Arjuna was published in 2022. It is the sequel to her novel *Arjuna: Saga of a Pandava Warrior Prince*. She also published *Prithviraj Chauhan: The Emperor of Hearts* (2009), *Muhammad Bin Tughlaq: Tale of a Tyrant* (2019), *Kartikeya: The Destroyer's Son* (2017).

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is an Indian-born American author, poet. She won American Book Award, a PEN Josephine Miles Award, and a Bay Area Book Reviewers Award for her first collection of stories *Arranged Marriage*. Her major novels include *The Mistress of Spices* (1997), *Sister of My Heart* (1999), *Queen of Dreams* (2004), *One Amazing Thing* (2009), *Palace of Illusions* (2008), *Oleander Girl and Before We Visit the Goddess* (2010). She has also written a young adult fantasy series called *The Brotherhood of the Conch*.

The Palace of Illusions by Divakaruni is a retelling of the Indian epic The Mahabharata from Draupadi's viewpoint and was a national best-seller in India for more than a year. The Atlantic Monthly and The New Yorker have both featured Divakaruni's writing, and it has also appeared in anthologies like Best American Short Stories, O. Henry Prize Stories, and Pushcart Prize Anthology. Among the 29 languages into which her fiction has been translated are Dutch, Hebrew, Indonesian, Bengali, Turkish, and Japanese.

Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty is an American Indologist. *The Hindus: An Alternative History* (2009), *Asceticism and Eroticism in the Mythology of Siva* (1973), *Hindu Myths: A Sourcebook* (2009), *The Origins of Evil in Hindu Mythology* (1976), *Women, Androgynes, and Other Mythical Beasts* (1980), and *The Rig Veda: An Anthology*, 108 Hymns Translated from the Sanskrit are some of Wendy's most well-known works.

Kavita Kane (born 5 August 1966) is an Indian writer and former journalist. She graduated from Fergusson College in Pune and earned her postgraduate degrees from the University of Pune in both English literature and mass communication. She initially intended to work in the administrative services, but changed her mind because journalism was the only practical career for writing and she wanted to write. She spent 20 years working for various media outlets, including The Times of India, Daily News and Analysis, and Magna Publications.

Her first book, *Karna's Wife*, was a bestseller, and she decided to devote herself to writing full-time. She is known for writing Mythology-fiction. All of her books are based on Indian mythology.

Kane is best known for her novel *The Karna's Wife: The Outcast's Queen* (2013). Later on she continued to retelling the stories. Some of her famous books are *Sita's Sister* (2014), *Menaka's Choice* (2015), *Lanka's Princess* (2016), *The Fisher Queen's Dynasty* (2017), *Ahalya's Awakening* (2019), *Sarasvati's Gift* (2021).

Through the eyes of his wife Uruvi, *The Karna's Wife: The Outcast's Queen* narrates the incredible tale of Karna, the unsung hero of the Mahabharata, giving the reader a novel viewpoint on his life. Uruvi learns to use her love and intellect to be accepted by Karna and his family and comes to terms with the societal repercussions of her marriage. Although she becomes his greatest supporter, coaching and advising him, she cannot break his unwavering commitment to Duryodhana. The story of Uruvi and Karna unfolds against the backdrop of the war between the Pandavas and the Kauravas. Uruvi is a witness to the twists and turns in Karna's fate as the events leading up to the Mahabharata's great war develop.

Her novel *Sita's Sister* tells us about the unheard voice of Urmila. Urmila is the neglected wife of Lakshman, and one of the most overlooked characters in the Ramayana. As her sister Sita accompanies her husband to go on exile, all her happiness is swept away as her husband Lakshman also joins with her brother. Urmila has no choice but to stay in the place Ayodhya. Kavita explains why Urmila tend to stay in place than going with her husband as her sister did. This novel tells how Urmila waited in the place for 14 years for her husband to return.

The story of Menaka, the most stunning apsara in the world with quick wit and natural talent, is told in *Menaka's Choice*. She yearns for the one thing, nevertheless, that she will never have: family. After undergoing tremendous penance, a man given the name Vishwamitra confronts the gods and dares to build a new heaven. Indra, the king of the gods, decides to put an end to his ambitions by having Menaka seduce him out of fear of his growing power. It reveals whether Menaka will ultimately achieve her goals or whether she will once more have to accept her fate.

Lanka's Princess is about Surpanakha who is Ravan's sister. As we know that Surpanakha was the reason behind the war that happened between Ram and Ravan. She is often the most misunderstood character in the Ramayana. Kavita tells us the real reason that started the war. It tells us about Surpanakha's childhood as she grows up with three brothers who were destined to win wars, fame and prestige, she, instead, charted out a path filled with misery and revenge. Kavita makes us to see the real reason why Surpanakha was mistreated.

Her next novel was *The Fisher Queen's Dynasty* narrates the Mahabharatha from the perspective of Queen Satyawati, matriarch of the Kuru clan. Satyawati, a stunning fisherwoman, reportedly grabbed the attention of King Shantanu of Hastinapur. Satyawati's father requested that her offspring inherit the throne in place of Bhishma, the King's son from his first marriage, in exchange for his daughter's hand in marriage. Bhishma, ever the obedient son, gave up his claim to the kingdom and vowed to live a celibate life. These choices had a long-lasting effect on the dynasty since the Kauravas and the Pandavas, Queen Satyawati's grandchildren, fought fiercely for the throne in the Mahabharatha War.

Ahalya's Awakening brings Ahalya into the light. Kané sees Ahalya as a driven individual who yearns for an identity separate from her physical attractiveness. Ahalya, a princess by birth and the daughter of King Mudgal and Queen Nalayani, is not only gorgeous but brave and smart as well. Unfortunately, her parents, especially her mother, who is only concerned with her physical beauty, entirely disregard this aspect of her nature. She wants to further her education, in contrast to other female members born into monarchy. She want to become a knowledgeable rishika. Kavita describes what transpired for Ahalya after her divorce from her spouse.

Sarasvati is the goddess of art, music, and knowledge. In *Sarasvati's Gift*, Kavita Kane tells the tale of Sarasvati in the voices of unnamed celestials, mighty gods, and lower mortals. The bond she has with her creator, Brahma, is examined in the book, as is their odd union as the Triumvirate's most non-conformist and out-there coupling. We catch a peek of an incredible woman and her remarkable story that have been hidden and covered over by myths and stories as these supporting actors and silent catalysts take the stage.

Kavita said in an interview that the spotlight of marginalised and minor characters can change the narrative. We can see them, hear them, give them a voice to tell their version of the same story. Most of her novels are based on retelling Mahabaratha and Ramayana. But she focus on the most ignored and neglected characters like Urmila, Uruvi, Surpanakha and so on. When it comes to mythology everyone focus on male characters. Female characters are mostly forgotten and unheard. Kavita always tries to bring out the unheard female voice from mythology. That is why most of her books are famous as it tells about the female perspective. (Nerdy Bookarazzi)

This study is on about Urmila and Surpanaka from Ramayana. These two women's voices have been unheard and they have been neglected by others. We are always trained to be

saved by a man or hero by the end of the day. But no one cares about what the women are going through while the men are out saving the world. Through an analysis of Kavita Kane's novels *Lanka's Princess* and *Sita's Sister* we'll come to know about their pain.

The objectives of the present study are to understand the reasons behind Surpanaka's act towards Ram and to know whether she was the reason behind Ravan's death. To understand the real reason why Urmila choose to stay in Ayodhya and not accompany her husband to the forest. To understand her motivation for wanting to wed Lakshman while knowing the consequences. To bring out the female perspective in the novel *Lanka's Princess* and *Sita's Sister* by Kavita Kane.

This paper is divided into four chapters, including introduction and conclusion and two more chapters in-between.

Chapter 1 entitled "Introduction" gives some brief history about mythology and rewriting the myths. It also tells about literature and a short note about mythology writers. Its gives some details about Kavita Kane and her novels.

Chapter 2 titled "The Lost Princess" gives us some detail about Surpanakha. It explains why she was despised by everyone and what the true motivation for her actions was. It also raises the question of whether she was to blame for her entire family's destruction.

Chapter 3 entitled "The Forgotten Voice of Urmila" deals with Urmila and her reasons to stay behind in Ayodhya as her husband leaves her with his brother for his 14 years of exile. It expresses how she felt as she tended to remain stationary and what she was going through because her husband was far away and unable to help her. Additionally, it describes how she overcame all of those challenges on her own.

Chapter 4 entitled "Conclusion" deals with the similar problems with these two novels by Kavita. How women are being neglected by men and how female voices are been unheard.

Chapter II

The Lost Princess

All are familiar with the Ramayana's tale. Additionally, everyone believes that Surpanakha was the cause of the conflict in which Ram killed Ravan. According to the Ramayana, Surpanakha sees Ram, Sita, and Lakshman during their 14 years of exile in the forest. She tries to entice one of them with her charms because of their attractiveness, but not one of them is susceptible to her schemes. Lakshman cuts her in the nose. As a result of her humiliation, Surpanakha informs her brother Ravan, who is thought to be more powerful. At that point, Ravan learns about Sita and kidnaps her. When Ram about the kidnapping, he challenges Ravan to let him rescue his wife. The battle starts here, as Ram defeats Ravan and saves Sita. This is the tale that the Ramayana tells. However, Surpanakha's motivation for doing this is unknown

Traditionally, mythology has been seen as the path for men. The stories always conclude with a statement about mankind and what they did, just like in the Ramayana and Mahabharata. But none doesn't pay attention to women. The narrative silences women throughout the story. The epics include female characters hardly have an important role. Sita, Urmila, Surpanakha, Mandodhira, and Kausalya's voices are not being heard. In this essay, will examine Surpanakha's perspective in Kavita Kane's *Lanka's Princess* through the broad prism of feminism.

Surpanakha will be the subject of a completely different story in Kavita's *Lanka's Princess*. The fourth child born to Rishi Vishravas and Kaikesi was Surpanakha. Although Kaikesi came from an asura family, she was regarded as the most stunning woman. She was the

second bride that Rishi Vishravas married after falling in love with her. Kaikesi always desired sons so that she might reclaim her kingdom of Lanka. To realise her vision of an asura kingdom with her sons governing the globe and Lanka, their lost golden city, as their capital, Kaikesi required sons. The kingdom, throne, and crown had to be relinquished by Kaikesi's father to Vishnu.

“It’s a girl!”. Kaikesi heard the words as the last wave of pain and relief. It was a daughter, not a son, her heart sank, her aspirations drowning in a flood of disappointment and easy tears.” (*LP 1*)

Kaikesi was extremely dissatisfied because it was useless for her to have given birth to a girl. Her daughter's big, honey-coloured eyes glistened against her dark skin like twin golden orbs. Her eyes were as brilliant and elegant as those of a fish, so they gave her the name Meenakshi. She did, however, have unusually long nails as a baby. They had a conspicuous crescent-shaped moon and almost resembled claws because they were curled and almost curling.

Meenakshi tends to be more daring and bold than her brothers because she was nurtured alongside Ravan, Kumbhakarna, and Vibhishan. She got into altercations with the other ashram students. Kaikesi preferred a boy to rise rather than a girl. Meenakshi didn't get enough love from her family growing up. Everyone always showed a great deal of love to Ravan because he was the oldest. In everything, Ravan was always superior. Meenakshi was envious of him, believing that her parents should have showered him with affection. Meenakshi and Ravan didn't get along well growing up. However, Kumbhakarna always showed her sister love. Vibhishan, on the other hand, was more interested in books and didn't give more attention to her. Vibhishan

was his father's favourite kid, whereas Ravan and Kumbhakarna belonged to their mother. Both of them never regarded Meenakshi as their favourite.

Ravan murdered Meenakshi's pet lamp when she was five years old because it devoured all the medicinal plants he had planted for the rishis at the ashram. Ravan has an extremely nasty temper all the time. Kumbhakarna was unable to wrestle him away when Ravan attempted to kill Meenu's lamp. Meenakshi noticed that her anger was growing. She was furious because her brother had killed her pet. With his bare hands, Ravan had suffocated her pet, Maya.

“Meenakshi felt her own hand twitch and like a cat sprang on the unsuspecting Ravan, digging her nails into the tender flesh of his neck, her teeth bared in apoplectic frenzy. Ravan gave a cry of surprise, curdling into a scream of pain, one arm protecting his face against her clawing fingers, the other trying to wrench her off. But she clung on, ripping her sharp nails unto any exposed flesh, tearing the skin, sinking deeper too gouge. Vibishan was too scared to move, shocked speechless. The heavy but nimble-footed Kumbhakarna was quicker. He caught hold of his sister's wrists and pulled her off Ravan, now bleeding profusely, shaken but as furious as his little sister.” *(LP 8)*

Meenakshi used her long claws to rip Ravan's skin. Her behaviour astounded everyone. Ravan attempted to strike her, but Kumbhakarna intervened in time to stop him. She was identified by Ravan as Surpanakha, a witch with long, pointed nails. Meenakshi heard the word "surpanakha" resound in her ears. Her bloodied nails still had some of her brother's flesh hanging loosely when she gazed down at them. This sort of behaviour was not tolerated at Vishravas' ashram. Because of the infraction in his ashram, he slapped Ravan. Meenakshi was quite pleased

since Ravan cannot tolerate being humiliated in front of everyone. This is where the hate for Ravan started.

Kaikesi hit Meenakshi after everyone had departed because she had harmed Ravan. Kaikesi consistently preferred Ravan to Meenakshi. Meenakshi, though, didn't give more thought about her mother or Ravan. Meenakshi did not whimper even when her mother gripped her tightly by the wrist and dug her fingers into her skin. But the new strength to fight once more came from the shooting anguish. Meenaksi should actually be called Surpanakha, a monster, as Ravan had predicted. In the sunlight, Kaikesi noticed how her daughter's nails sparkled. Kaikesi felt a strange sensation creep up her spine: frigid fear. Has she given birth to a monster? Meenakshi was forced to despise her mother even more by this deed.

Ravan and Meenakshi ignored one another following that incident. She also didn't get along well with her mother. She preferred being with her father, who adored her nonetheless. Meenakshi aspired to become her father's adoring daughter as the days passed. Vibishan always received all of Vishravas' attention. Considering that he was the lone kid and that he was always patient, Meenakshi began to lose Vishravas' interest. However, her grandparents frequently visited their ashram. Meenakshi only received love from her grandmother, Taraka. She instructed her in witchcraft. Sumali, her grandfather, never paid her any attention. Ravan was his only area of interest. He thought that he would be the one to win them back their golden city. When he had the opportunity, Sumali trained Ravan and told him the legend of the gods stealing their city. Ravan's sole aspiration was to regain control of his city and grow in strength.

Meenakshi was now 12 years old, and she had undergone an unfavourable physical alteration. She was still a short, dark, gangly girl with a developing bust that was too big for her

tiny waist and short frame. Never before have her lack of charm and plainness been so obvious. She was an outcast who would never fit in with her family of attractive people.

Meenakshi was left with her parents in the ashram alone while her three brothers went in search of Brahma's ultimate knowledge and enlightenment. Kuber, Vishrava's first son, came to see his father in the ashram. Kuber was a fair, stocky man with jet-black hair who was prone to gaining weight. Due to the fact that Kuber was the new king of Lanka, which was her city, Kaikesi had never warmed to him. Kuber learns that his stepbrothers have travelled to Barhma to ask for his blessings.

This infuriated and alarmed him. He has always been aware of Ravan's superior strength. Ravan attacking him and stealing his crown was the last thing he wanted. He was aware that Kaikesi would give the order to assault Lanka when his stepbrothers returns and imprisons him. But he employed Meenakshi as a negotiating chip to get out of this predicament. He intended to use her as leverage in his negotiations with her brothers, a concession that would help his cause. To ensure that they would never dare attack the golden city, Kuber intended to bring her to Lanka with him.

When Kuber attempted to kidnap her, Kaikesi made an effort to let her daughter go. Nothing Vishravas said to persuade him was effective. As Kaikesi attempted to attack him with a stick, Kuber tackled her to the ground. Meenakshi seized the chance and dug her claws deep into Kuber's finger's tender flesh while clutching her wrist. He winced, and the hold loosened just a little. She quickly dragged her nails down the length of his exposed arm with her other free arm, cutting deeply into the flesh. Kuber yelled more out of astonishment than pain. He had not anticipated the young girl taking offence. She was small and feeble, and he could have easily

crushed her wrists between his grasping fingers. Yet, as he peered into her eyes, he saw a stream of fire flowing forth to scorch him. He was raked instead by the fast flash of her nails as he felt them ripping at his skin and pulling blood from the deep wound in his face. He instinctively let go of her and clenched his teeth.

“‘Hellcat!’ he spluttered. ‘Yes, that and more!’ she sibilated. ‘I am known as Surpanakha!!’ She spoke in a glacial, featureless voice that did not quite conceal a frightened anxiety.” (*LP 44*)

She knew that she was Surpanakha. She attacked him once more, aggressively clawing at his exposed shoulders and back. The girl redoubled her onslaught as Kuber withdrew, hiding his face with his chubby hands. His skin was being scraped by her nails, and he could feel warm blood gushing onto his face. With his hands reaching out to touch the pitiful child with her flying hair and blazing eyes, he shouted in agony. He lost his footing as she kicked at his legs and scratched at his wrists. He stumbled and nearly fell. Fortunately, his father intervened, removing the writhing girl from his grasp and squeezing her firmly by the shoulders. The girl fought to release herself while glaring menacingly at the viewer.

Kaikesi became even more enraged by Kuber's action and she wanted to reclaim Lanka. She desired to exact justice on him. At that point, she learns that the rishi Agastya killed her father. Her mother was transformed into a monster, but they spared her and took her to the Dandak wilderness. Meenakshi found it hard to accept that her grandma had been transformed into a monster. She loved her more than anything or anyone. According to Kaikesi, Ravan will hear about this and take away Kuber's dominion while also making his grandfather proud. Meenakshi was perplexed because she was the one Kuber almost kidnapped, and her parents

were now arguing over whether or not Ravan should take Lanka away. Nobody really cared about her because it was always about Ravan.

Her brothers arrived home at last. Bharma gave his blessings on everyone. Brahma granted Ravan the gift of eternal life. Ravan yearned to take Lanka back after learning of his grandfather's passing and what Kuber had done to his sister. When Ravan objected, Vishravas didn't want him to start a battle against his stepbrother; as a result, their father had to depart. Meenakshi was made to feel worse by this. The person she loved most in her family was her father, but he abandoned her so that Ravan could exact his vengeance. She attempted to accompany her father, but he didn't respect her decision.

Everyone travelled to Lanka the following day. Ravan didn't want to start a war; he wanted this to be peaceful. So he requested Kuber to give their grandfather's throne back, which Vishnu had taken. Kuber was forced to abandon his efforts. He was aware that fighting Ravan would not be successful. They now had control over the entire kingdom. Ravan ascended to the throne of Lanka. Meenakshi had never witnessed a gold-filled city. It was just as big as the woodland where she had previously lived. She enjoyed her time there, but her happiness would increase if her father joined them and stayed with them. She was sad since her father was not around her.

Everyone believed that Ravan wished to retake Lanka because of his anger as a result of what Kuber had done to Meenu. To think that she was the reason Ravan snatched Lanka away from Kuber, Meenakshi was not a fool, though. She was aware of his desire to be compassionate, and he was using her as an excuse.

“Kuber’s audacity at what he did to you, prompted Ravan to teach him a lesson and throw him out of his own kingdom!’ said Kumbha. Meenakshi shook her head. ‘Yes, so all believe. But did Ravan really do this for me? Do you honestly believe that? I was an excuse; Ravan would have taken Lanka from Kuber anyway, one day. He was simply waiting for the right time and opportunity. I seem to have given him that.’ An inexplicable emotion flitted in the jet black eyes of Kumbha making Meenakshi suddenly feel uneasy. ‘You are quite thankless aren’t you, little sister?’ said Kumbha, ruefully. ‘Ravan staked his everything for you, for the way Kuber treated you. And you coolly turn around and claim Ravan did it selfishly, because he would have anyways...’ ‘Wouldn’t he?’ she challenged.” (LP 70)

Meenakshi had a point. When the perfect moment came, Ravan would have snatched Lanka from Kuber, but he was waiting for that to happen, and Meenu served as an excuse. Now he could enjoy Lanka. Her brother, Ravan, constantly showered her with gifts and jewellery, and she took lessons from her uncle. She was unwilling to let go of her father with her brother, however, so nothing delighted her. It was solitary at Lanka. At this point, Ravan had crowned himself "Emperor of the Three Worlds." He was aware of his invincibility not just because of the nectar of immortality he carried in his navel, but also because of the brand-new Chandrahas sword he had just received from Lord Shiva. Even when he went on his aerial tours in the Pushpak Viman, he always had it with him, neatly slung at his waist. He was as devoted to stringing his veena as he was to flying his Pushpak.

Meenakshi wished she had a companion she could have engaged in pointless conversation with. She was a princess who lived alone in her golden palace and was the

emperor's sister. Other than her maids, she hardly spoke to anyone. She didn't enjoy mingling at formal events either. She felt choked off by their conversations. Meenakshi became either irritated or outraged due to the words and themes being so routine and uninteresting.

It seemed as if one were in prison since there was no getting out of it or away from it. She led a similar life in Lanka. Because of this painful boredom, she wished she could accomplish something more important. She only had her mother and brothers, and because they were all busy, she was frequently left alone. She had grown more distant from them after her father left, becoming especially aloof and withdrawn. She shared no particular affection or closeness with the family, just like her father had before her.

Soon after, Kaikesi helped Ravan form an alliance. The good marriage proposals for her other two brothers had also poured in; and as always, her mother preened brushing Kumbha and Vibhishan aside for Ravan. Strangely, she received no proposals for marriage. Even though Meenakshi was already 18 years old, females her age were being married. She was aware of the cause Ravan and his terrifying power for the strange dwindling of proposals. No monarch or prince mortal, deva, or daitya was eager to wed her for fear of upsetting the supreme emperor, who was the most powerful man in the world. The impact of her brother was felt all around the world.

Mandodari was the wife of Ravan. Mandodari was being married even though she had just turned sixteen. Meenakshi experienced jealousy once more. The older but unmarried brothers of Mandodari wished to wed their younger sister before them. In contrast to her brothers, she possessed the kind of respect a brother must have for his sister. In her family, that thoughtfulness and care for others seem to be lacking. A month after Ravan's wedding and while

negotiations for Vibhishan's were ongoing, Kumbha's wedding was also set. Hers was not at all in the plan of things.

When Ravan was getting married, she was in her chamber. She was unwilling to be with them. She missed her father because he didn't attend his sons' wedding on this particular occasion. All of this was made possible by the fact that Ravan and her mother allowed him to leave the family. She believed that this was the only cause of the division in the family. She was preoccupied with her thoughts when she heard a voice coming from the door. She then encountered Vidyujiiva, the king of Ashma.

“‘It is unusual for the sister of the groom to be sitting all by herself,’ said a voice from behind, interrupting her thoughts. It was a deep, male voice. She whirled around, annoyed. She was confronted with the tall, hulking figure of a young man, blocking her way and too close enough for comfort. His deeply tanned face was long and narrow and his alert eyes a mysterious black. Like an abyss, she thought. With thick, raven dark hair over a narrow forehead, his lean, dark face was attractive, yet not handsome, in an animal kind of way. He was lean and tall and like a beautiful young horse. The width of his shoulders was impressive and his long hair, curling to his strong, bronzed neck, excited her.” *(LP 93-94)*

Vidyujiiva was a well-known enemy of Ravan. He was the ruler of the Kalkeyas, the strongest clan, and Ravan has yet to conquer them. So they formed a partnership with them. But Ravan never had faith in him. Meenakshi had such a strong attraction to this man that she didn't want him to let go. She was clever, however, and didn't want him to be aware of her desires. The

woman-knowing Vidyujiva. He was aware of all the alert signs and realised that his seduction at the right time required more skill.

Meenakshi kept thinking about him as the days went by. She was anticipating Kumbha's wedding so that she might see her again; she wanted to meet him again. But Kumbha's words was still echoing in her ears. 'Don't take Vidyujiva seriously because he's a rascal. Be careful since he has a happy eye like our brother Ravan. And like him, he emits a charm that is deadly rather than charming'. She couldn't stop reflecting on what Kumbha had said. She also learned the reason Ravan hated him even more. Vidyujiva is a person who cannot be trusted.

At Kumbha's wedding, Meenakshi first ran into him. She tried to ignore him, but he continued in following her. Even though Vidyujiva claimed to love her, she made an effort not to fall for his words. She believed he was treating her like a toy, thus she was not ready to accept him. To demonstrate his devotion for her, Vidyujiva met her in secret in her chambers one day. This time, she did not hold back. Meenakshi desired him too. However, her brothers found about them. Ravan was aware that he cannot be relied upon and that her sister will suffer if they get married. Meenakshi prevented Ravan from killing him right away, ignoring his wanting to do so. She also had feelings for him. However, neither of her brothers was rational enough to accept that.

Vidyujiva was sent into the dark dungeons by Ravan. Meenakshi made an effort to convince her brother that she was also at fault. However, Ravan wants her to wed someone else instead of Vidyujiva. Meenakshi was unable to keep up with this request. More than anything else in the world, she yearned for Vidujiva. According to Ravan, Vidujiva was claimed to be a womanizer. This brought to her mind the time when Ravan attempted to seduce Vedavathi. She

was a devoted follower of Vishnu, but when Ravan sought her for himself, she cursed him and set herself on fire. Only she and her mother had known about this. Rambha, who was also Kuber's daughter-in-law, was raped by Ravan. Rambha was Ravan's daughter-in-law too.

“It did not poke your conscience. To avenge Kuber, you used Rambha to humiliate him, mindless that you molested a woman for your revenge and show your strength, you despicable coward!’ she lashed, her eyes accusing. ‘Silence!’ roared Kumbha, making a move towards Meenakshi. She stood undeterred, glaring balefully at Ravan. He was quiet, his eyes thoughtful but unashamed. ‘These are political moves,’ he said dismissively. ‘After my win, Rambha would have been offered to me as a token of truce! She is an apsara, a temptress by profession...!’ ‘And that takes away her freedom to her body, her choice, her desires but gives you the privilege of over-riding her refusal and taking her by force?’ she retorted furiously. ‘Vidyujiva made love to me because I wanted him to, because I allowed him to...!’” (*LP 121*)

Meenakshi made a point by stating that a man should never touch a woman without getting her consent; doing so equals rape. Ravan attempted to attract Vedavathi and raped Rambha. As for this situation, when a male acts in a certain way, it is seen as right, but when a woman acts in the same way, it is being judged. Meenakshi wanted Vidyujiva for herself, so she gave him permission to embrace her. Ravan was forced to have Meenakshi marry the person she loves after hearing what she said. He just had one request that Vidyujiva remain in charge and be with their family. He was forbidden from going back to his kingdom. Meena was not okay by this decision because she desperately wanted to escape this torment. Vidyujiva, however, complied with Ravan's request. Meenakshi didn't want this to happen, but Vidyujiva persuaded

her to stay for a while he gains Ravan's trust in the hopes that they would soon return to their country where she could rule as queen. Meenakshi accepted his suggestion, stayed in her palace, and was content to be with Vidyujiva.

After a number of years had passed, Meenakshi and Vidyujiva welcomed their first child. There were several kids playing around the palace, so the family appeared to be happy. Meenakshi kept living in Lanka, and Vidyujiva didn't appear to give any thought to anything. He is a participant in Ravan's court. Meenakshi was concerned since she didn't want him to be fighting alongside Ravan in wars. As Kaikesi became a grandmother and Meena became a mother, Meenakshi and her mother began to develop a new relationship. The family's female members developed a new closeness with one another. Every time, everyone was present. Everyone had kids, and they added to the palace's brightness. This made Meenakshi happy.

One day she unexpectedly received the dreadful news. In the woods, her grandmother was murdered. For the first time, she heard about Ram and Lakshman, the prince of Ayodhya. Even the fact that they were both teenagers surprised Meenakshi. Even though her grandmother is regarded as the best witch, she couldn't explain how two young men managed to kill her. She recalled their names so that she would never be able to forget what they had done to her nani.

Meenakshi observed Mandodari to be increasingly angry and confused. Meenakshi asked her what was bothering her, but she already knew the answer, it was Ravan. To marry Sita, Ravan travelled to Mithila for the swayamvar. In order to raise Lord Shiva's Bow as evidence of his strength, Ravan travelled there. He was very devoted to Shiva. Despite not being invited, Ravan still made the decision to attend the swayamvar. Mandodari worried that he may launch a

new war, and Sita was the person she was most concerned about. According to legend, Sita once raised Shiva's bow when she was younger. She is concerned that Ravan wanted Sita at all costs.

Mandodari never quits up even knowing her marriage was a failure. Before she met Vidyujiva, the sensation used to encourage Meenakshi. This family and this golden palace made them prisoners on the edge of themselves, controlling, holding, restraining, and repressing that rage of annoyance, churning in the patient endurance of suffering and sorrow. She had feared that her tortured mind might go insane and rushed back to the safety of the woodland. But after meeting Vidyujiva, her life underwent a permanent transformation.

“‘It would be better for us if we just gave up and accepted the failure, but we don’t, never. We keep going through the cycle of hope, disappointment, love and disillusionment...’ continued Mandodari, pushing her hair back absently. ‘All for our men; we dress up for them, we keep house for them, we have their children, we carry on their lineage, we even suffer for them, and deal with their vanities and a lot else...why? Because we love them!’ she said selfdeprecatingly.

‘Because I love him!’ It was as if she was talking to herself, realized Meenakshi. ‘We bring up our children, we cope, we laugh, we make meals, make merry and make love. We can even live our life without our men, either at war or with other women. Or as widows. Ravan’s women will lead to war one day, I know,’ she breathed, her eyes shut. ‘War and women—our two enemies,’ she continued hollowly. ‘But we take it, all the bad. And believe we are brave, and safe and good, but why don’t we admit to this failure? It would do us a lot of good.’” (*LP* 155)

Meenakshi can relate to Mandodari since Ravan has caused suffering for everyone in her family. But she secretly believed that her partner wouldn't ever betray her nor do anything to harm her. Meenakshi was aware of Ravan's ability to switch between other women. Everyone but Mandodari was aware that no matter what their partner does, she will be the last to learn of his affair.

Meenakshi learned from Vidyujiva that Ravan had fallen short in the swayamvar and was unable to raise the Bow. He was incredibly enraged by this. He was totally fixated on Sita. Sita's hand has been gained by Ram of Ayodhya. The fact that a boy half his age has won Ravan over is too much for him to handle. He suffered humiliation in public. Ram was the one who murdered her grandmother, thus she also remembers him for that reason. Meenakshi found it hard to accept Ram's victory over Ravan. As Ravan never gave anyone his war credits to Vidyujiva, he agreed to move to his kingdom. Soon Meenakshi, her husband, and her son Kumar were about to move to their legitimate kingdom.

A few days later, everyone was delighted about Ravan's son winning war against Lord Indra. But throughout the conflict, something else happened. While advancing into the netherworld in the Asmanagara conflict, Vidyujiva was killed. Meenakshi found it difficult to accept her husband's passing. She desired for everything to be untrue. As soon as she noticed Ravan enter the room, she questioned him about how her husband could have died while Ravan was on the battlefield. She learned that Ravan was responsible for her husband's death. Although she was unable to understand what was happening, she was aware that they were keeping something from her.

Meenakshi was being deceived by her partner, according to Ravan. Meenakshi became enraged and spat on her maid's face. Vidyujiiva had always intended to murder every member of the family and claim the throne for himself. Although he had planned it with the court ministers, Ravan finally learned of it. She has been fooled by Vidyujiiva with all of the ladies of the palace and the kingdom as well. Except for Meenakshi, everyone in the family has been aware of this. The last person to learn about her husband was her.

“‘What other truth did I not have the courage to tell you? That he was a scoundrel who spared no woman in the palace,’ continued Ravan relentlessly. ‘Let you know he was whoring with all the women in Lanka, and he whored himself to you too so that he could gain power and crown! Let you know that he was always the wretch I knew he was, an enemy in our midst, our family, dreaming of taking the throne someday. Let you know that he planned to have us all killed; let you know that he intended to do all this under your very nose!!’ he continued, between his teeth. ‘He was waiting for the opportune time when Kumbha would slip into his slumber next month, so that is one brother less to fight. He had it all planned, but what he did not know was that we knew about it. I had kept watch on him always. He could fool you, never me!’ She shuddered, putting her hands to her face. ‘For which he had to be killed?’ she gasped, her face slack with shock and fury. ‘How do I know it to be true? You never gave him a chance to live and to explain...’”

(LP 167-168)

Ravan should have given Vidyujiiva the opportunity to explain his actions. Meenakshi had a rooted hesitation to accept what people were saying about him. She adored him the most of all, and she was aware that he felt the same way. She didn't want to realize that she had been

misled throughout. She didn't see the man she loved on the other side. Everyone spoke out in support of her regarding her husband, but people don't often listen or believe. She was unable to accept the truth and didn't want to accept the truth because she loved him so much.

Meenakshi became more furious. She eventually came to the conclusion that Ravan murdered her husband in order to protect himself, his throne, and his own family. He didn't do this to punish Vidyuja for cheating her. Now he had another justification for killing Vidyuja, and this time it was her. Everyone in her family was aware of him, but they did not inform her right away. As Meenakshi was in love with him she was unable to spot his mistakes. Meenakshi was unable to recognize his weaknesses because she loved and trusted him too much. When it came to dealing with love and family, women were reduced to their most basic selves. They were purified by their ability to love others. Her modest family, her spouse, and her love had all been destroyed by her own family. Right now, she detested every one of them. Vidyuja had rescued her from her family since she had been undesired there. The warmth, tranquilly, sensation of being loved, and sense of belonging that none of them could have given her; he had instead given her via his love. Not even her brothers or her mother.

Meenakshi was able to realize that all she lost was Ravan's fault when she couldn't take it any longer and everyone continued revealing the truth about her husband. She revealed all of Ravan's secrets, including how he killed Vedvathi and raped Rambha, shattering the truth. All of them kept secret because he was the king and nobody dared speak ill of him. He was cursed and is now forbidden from touching any other women without their permission. The family was caught off surprise by this. The mere fact that her husband had an extramarital affair did not give him the right to be killed. Meenakshi believed that everyone believed Ravan's narrative because they feared him. Meenakshi transformed into Surpanakha, a monster with no mercy that had

never shown love or kindness to anyone. After witnessing everything, her only wish was to witness Ravan's death.

Surpanakha wished to leave the palace after the elaborate funeral for Vidyujiiva and make her home in the Dandak forest, where Mareech had retired. She no longer desired to remain at the palace. Her husband was reminded of everything she witnessed. Together with her son Kumar, she wished to depart for the wilderness. But secretly, she was working on a plan to murder Ravan. She planned to instill in Kumar a hatred for his uncle so that he would kill him. All along, this was her aircraft. Surpanakha refused to be remarried, despite his wishes. She was given full access to the Dandak forest, including all of the wildlife, people, and men in particular. But he didn't believe she could live there in safety.

Surpanakha was cruelly reminded of Vidyujiiva every time she looked at Kumar. She saw how similar the tall, eighteen-year-old, muscular child was to his father as she watched him chop down the tree's limbs while the sun sparkled on his swarthy face. Years had passed, many summers had come and gone, and many winters had chilled her to the bone, but her memories of Vidyujiiva continued to shine brightly in her despairing heart.

Surpanakha would wander aimlessly around the woods, grinning as she recalled every special moment she had shared with Vidyujiiva. She could still picture them all clearly. She would experience him as still being by her. Vidyujiiva was someone she would always remember since Kumar would not allow her to forget him even for a second. He hurt for more, but she made sure that Kumar had received thorough instruction from his granduncles Mareech, Khara, and Dushan to master all the divine and occult weapons. He aspired to receive Lord Shiva's blessings, just like Ravan had. And he will shortly begin his penance.

For six months, Surpanakha awaited her son's return. She wished to exact revenge on Ravan for all of his sins. She will be the one to punish him with death for everything he has done, including robbing land, killing people, and seducing women. Then one day Khara came up with news. He approached her and broke the dreadful news that her son had been murdered. His head was thrown away from the trunk by a foot when she spotted him, and his body was unbruised with no cuts to take away from its beauty. Her gaze slowly descended to the bed of grass where he was lying as her heart swelled and an awful sorrow broke from within her. Her chilly sweat began to stream down her body. His headless neck was covered in a large red stain that was partially absorbed in a salty blood pool. She could make out the body's splayed feet and carefully positioned hands at his side. His appearance looked fresh and young. His eyes were closed, as if in a meditative sleep.

Surpanakha started to despise herself, Ravan, his wife, her mother, Kumbha, Vibhishan, and the entire horrifying, horrific revenge trail she had started. She wanted to approach them all and lay hands on them, gouging out their eyes and brains with her naked, bleeding hands while raking them with her nails. Because of what they had done to her, she wanted to harm and kill them all. She no longer cared what would happen to her. She wanted to kill the person who killed her son by herself.

Surpanakha learned that Ram, Lakshman, and Sita were in the same forest six weeks after Kumar's death. They had been exiled for 14 years. Ram and Lakshman were both responsible for her nani's passing; hence she planned to exact revenge on them. They were the most powerful warriors, therefore Khara warned everyone else not to attack them. Surpanakha thought of a plan to exact revenge on Ravan. But when she saw Sita was among them as well, she realised she had no idea how to launch a war. Sita was regarded as the most beautiful woman, and Ravan always

desired her. By telling Ravan that these three were living in the nature, she hoped that it would cause him to take Sita away. Ram and Lakshman will start their war in order to save her. She was very certain that Ravan would be defeated and that neither of them would be killed, allowing her to finally have what she had been waiting for. She had nothing left to lose after this.

“Ravan needed a Ram to kill him. Only a mortal could accomplish the deed, she recalled Brahma’s boon to Ravan. Her son, though the son of a mortal, had not been able to finish the deed.” (*LP 190-191*)

Ram was the son of a mortal and she knew that Ram could kill Ravan. It was an easy strategy. Surpanakha would approach the princes, become friends with them, and find out why they were visiting the forest. She would go back to Lanka and tell an irate Ravan how they had attacked her, to which the prickly Ravan would undoubtedly respond. She was aware of her brother's mentality and that he always declared war for noble reasons. She would be the reason for this conflict, but Sita would be the objective. She would be the humiliated sister, and Ravan would be the righteously angry brother seeking to exact revenge on his sister. She was aware that he would respond by stealing Ram's Sita in order to redeem his damaged reputation and punish Ram.

Family was one of Ravan's advantages. He had an intense sense of ownership over them and was proud and guarded over them. He had hated his father because he had been powerless to protect his family, especially when Kuber had tried to kidnap Surpanakha. And Ravan had never been the same since that tragedy. His power turned into his weakness. Nobody dared to look irreverently or speak negatively about his family. She would humiliate and horrify Ravan,

compelling him to fight against her alleged violations and strike. She would bring him to his knees.

Surpanakha quickly located the exiled princes. Her attention was quickly drawn to the person standing. His face was set in an almost calm amicability, and he was tall and lean, it was Ram. She learned that when he left for his exile, the people of Ayodhya cried, following him all the way to the river. She continued to look at him, growing more fond of him with each passing second. As a rush of heated blood rushed in, she made fists out of her hands. Lakshman was then what caught her eye because he was close to him. She kept looking at both because they were so gorgeous. She wanted both of them terribly, but things were not going as she had planned. She thought about Vidyujiva and her love for him but none of that mattered to her now. The lust feeling took over her feelings and she began to walk towards them. She approached them, with a suggestive sway of her flaring hips, walking with confidence and purported friendliness.

When Ram spotted Surpanakha coming, he gave her a friendly greeting first. Lakshman presented a tough attitude throughout. Ram began by introducing his brother and himself, and the two gradually developed a conversation. Ram summoned out Sita, who is his wife, when he learned about Surpanakha's plans. When she first laid eyes on Sita, she immediately understood what everyone had been raving about. She appeared to be rather lovely. She was met by Sita with a grin, and Surpanakha once more requested that Ram take her. Ram, however, declined her offer since he didn't want two wives.

Surpanakha was quite astonished by this. Ram then joked that she might have his brother if she so desired because he is single. Before she could even ask him, Lakshman declined the offer. He claimed to love his wife above all else and to desire to remain faithful to her. He

repeated that she should select Ram over him if she wanted someone better. Surpanakha became aware of two of the males playing with her at that point. They were making fun of her for asking the question. Ram had rejected Surpanakha, who became enraged when she saw Sita. She intended to make an example of them for making her appear foolish.

With a furious expression on her face, Surpanakha moved closer and sprang at the paralyzed Sita. She stunned Ram, who then requested Lakshman to stop Surpanakha. When Lakshman suddenly walked towards her and grabbed her by the hair, pulling fiercely, with his sword swinging in his other hand, she barely noticed his words as she hurriedly approached Sita. She froze in disbelief. She pulled free and spun around to face him, her arms outstretched to strike out her claws and her eyes ablaze.

Lakshman attempted to grip her arms but fell. As she landed on him, her hands began to rip at his throat. His sword was forced to fall to the ground as she hooked her fingers and stabbed at his face with her left hand. She was surprisingly strong, with sharp claws still aimed for his eyes and throat, despite his look of astonishment as he held her wrists. She aggressively kicked his legs as her blade fell to the ground, trying to release his hold. She could feel his hold loosening as proof that she was succeeding. However, he rapidly swung her over, locking her arm, and smashing her face down. He put a little pressure on her arm, and she could feel his weight on the small of her back. She gave a loud yelp and he eased up. Ram didn't want her dead but Lakshman was ready to kill her because she was a shape shifting asura.

“Her face exploded in pain, throbbing violently, a thousand shooting pain pulsating in a charged wave, drowning her in unspeakable agony. She couldn't move her face, each movement an excruciating torture yet she looked around

wildly, moving solely her eyes. And then she saw it: her eyes falling to a sickening sight. Three odd bloody pieces of flesh and cartilage strewn carelessly in the dust. She stared at it confused and befuddled, the pain coursing through her, not allowing her to think. She touched her face again: it felt odd, her hands slipping off the wetness of her blood. She had no nose! She gasped in frenzied horror. Her frantic hands moved further over her ruined face...she felt no ear where it should be. Nor the other, her frightened mind whispered to her. She looked down comprehendingly. It was the straggly remains of her ears and her nose that were lying at her feet. It was then she screamed, her wail sailing through the still air. She clutched her hands over her chest, on her knees, begging, sobbing for mercy, the blood and tears dripping off her bowed, mutilated face.” (LP 202-203)

Lakshman slit her nose while attempting to harm a woman who was unarmed. By doing this, Surpanakha felt ashamed. She never imagined that it would come to this and bring her shame. She was urged to go back to her rightful place. Surpanakha was horrified and left the area in order to protect herself. What Ram and Lakshman did was wrong, they could have just rejected and avoided her but instead they slit her nose. These actions changed Surpanakha.

Surpanakha was back in Lanka and she only wanted to see Ravan. All that she owed her family was ashes in their mouths. As she entered his court, Surpanakha pulled the veil closer to cover her face. She silently pulled back the veil as soon as she noticed Ravan and exposed her face. Some others gasped in fright, while others did so in disgust, as seen by the horrified looks on their faces. Her face was incredibly offensive to everyone who saw it. Surpanakha only

desired the death of Ravan, and now she was opposed by Ram and Lakshman. She also desired to exact revenge on them.

When Surpanakha approached Ravan, she used a different tale to deceive him into becoming agitated and attempting to kidnap Sita. She started out by explaining why Ram did not deserve Sita. Surpanakha used the tale of Ravan being embarrassed because he was unable to lift Shiva's Bow to get Ravan's attention. She claimed that she wanted to give Sita to him so that he may have her. Lakshman prevented her from stealing Sita when she tried to. When she attempted to take Sita to her brother, Ram pleaded with him to teach her a lesson. Lakshman ultimately sliced her ears and nose when she was defenceless and without a weapon in her hand.

At Janasthan, Ram and Lakshman killed Khara, the leaders Dusan and Trisiras, as well as their whole standing army. Surpanakha attempted to completely twist this narrative so that Ravan would become enraged. Ravan blocked Vibishan's attempts to resolve the situation by attempting to start a war. Vibishan was aware of Surpanakha's scheme and did not want to be fooled. He made an effort to warn Ravan not to start a conflict with the two banished princes. He is aware of their strength because they were able to destroy an entire fleet without assistance. This tale of the two princes had grown old to Ravan. Finally, he declared that he would separate them from Sita.

“‘They attacked my sister, a woman. Now I shall take their woman too!’ he said tonelessly. ‘I shall take Sita.’ I have done it, she shouted silently in victory. She had pushed him into his well of hell. Vibhishan looked too stunned to respond.”

(LP 212-213)

Once more, Ravan was pursuing Sita while standing where he wished to preserve the honour of his sister. She was getting closer to fulfilling the cruel self-promise she had made to

see him dead. Even if it meant the end of her family, the palace, the kingdom, and her race, she wanted him dead. She was forced to endure suffering that she had no idea was possible because of Ravan, them, and everything else. She was finally getting the vengeance she desired.

Ravan kidnapped Sita and transported her to Lanka. The plan was cleverly simple: Mareech pretended to be a frisky deer while he hung out near Sita's ashram and charmed her into following him. Ram heard her pleading for it. Ram had to after Mareech as it sprinted away from the ashram, leaving Sita with Lakshman and removing a single obstacle from Ravan's path. Mareech, however, yelled in the dying Ram's voice, pleading with Lakshman for assistance. Lakshman raced to his brother's rescue in a panic.

Then, Ravan pretended to be a wandering beggar, and when Sita offered him some money, he grabbed her by the hands and hurried her to the Pushpak Viman, which was waiting to take her to Lanka. On the way though, he had been attacked by Jatayu, an old, formidable eagle who had given him a tough resistance until Ravan had grievously injured him by cutting off both his wings.

Mandodari was not pleased with his choice. Sita was never permitted into her home by her. Sita was therefore kept in the Ashok garden. Ravan was granted a year by Mandodari to convince Sita to reconsider her mind. But before that, Sits was certain that her husband would come to her rescue. Mandodari was aware of Surpanakaha's treatment of Ravan. She is not a victim of her cunning. Mandodari was aware that Ravan had committed this crime in order to capture Sita rather than to get revenge on Ram and Lakshman for what they had done to her sister. Ravan has always liked himself, and he does what he wants while using others as an excuse.

Ram despatched Hanuman, the monkey-man, an odd-looking messenger, to Ravan's court to plead for the release of his bride so that she may be returned to him with dignity. Instead of complying, Ravan had the ambassador imprisoned and placed in degrading iron chains.

Hanuman had responded in a way that Ravan would never have planned: he flexed his muscles, escaping his bonds, lit his tail, flourished it around, and set the palace and the garden on fire. He rushed out and wrecked destruction all over the city.

While the entire city was on fire, Surpanakha could hear the cries of the residents. Akshay Kumar, the youngest son of Ravan, was the first victim of the battle. Surpanakha believed he was making up for his father's sin. But she was aware that she was the one who killed him deep down. She is the one who launched this battle, which has not yet started and will claim all of her family members' lives. She became calm, though, when she witnessed Ravan sobbing over his dead kid. Ravan should have experienced the same suffering as she did.

Surpanakha was aware that every guy in her family would die, but she didn't want it to happen. Vibishan was persuaded to join Ram by her in some way. Vibishan didn't want to join Ravan's side or die in the war. He was the son of the kind and devoted Rishi Vishravas, who desired to be on the side of justice. Surpanakha was aware that she would need a successor to rule the kingdom if everyone in this family passed away. Vibishan is the best of her three siblings, therefore when she did that, Vibishan was forced to turn traitor and enlist in Ram's army.

In Lanka, Ram's army had already reached the ocean's edge. Sita's opinions have not changed. She received all she requested from Ravan, but she was not the kind of woman who was prey to his cunning. Ram was constantly on her thoughts. To meet Sita, Surpanakha went to

the Ashok garden. How is it that she won't reconsider? But after speaking with her, she realised that Sita was more devoted to Ram. Sita was aware that she was the reason for her kidnapping. Everything began on the day Surpanakha met them in the woods. Sita aimed to support her claim that her husband tried to shield her. He requested his brother to harm Surpanakha because of this. Surpanakha knew what they did to her; they made fun of her and humiliated her.

“‘Could they not handle a woman prepositioning them? Did they have to laugh and ridicule and make a filthy joke of my desires? I am still laughing!’ she gave a hard, barking laugh. ‘They grinned, they teased, they goaded me into a temper and I could vent it only on you, the silent spectator watching in amused silence!’ she spat, her breathing laboured. ‘If they found me so crass and crude and unwelcome, could they have not just politely refused me like the chivalrous warriors they claim themselves to be? You claim the immediate reason for my disfigurement is my attempt to attack you. But is it, Sita? I think, however, the implied reason is my attempt at adultery. Yet, how proper was Ram’s jest? If he is so upright as you claim, and had refusal in his mind all along, why, then, did he send me—a woman who has openly come to him to his younger brother knowing he was married too and very much in love with his wife? Could he not have refused me directly? Both the brothers thought it was a game and tossed me to and fro like a playing ball between them! Give me an answer, Sita, or are you making an effort to evade the question of their behaviour?’ Sita bit her lip. She lost her poise and looked uneasily at Surpanakha. She had no words of defence. How could she explain to Surpanakha that in the world she lived, there was a deep

suspicion of women's power and desirability flaunted so openly and when unchecked by male control?" (*LP 239-240*)

Ram and Lakshman acted wrong when they sought to punish Surpanakha for her actions but didn't harm her to stop her from stealing Sita. She did nothing wrong to deserve this penalty. Sita was aware that Surpanakha was correct, but they live in a world where men are in charge, she is unable to protect her husband. The men were highly pleased by Surpanakha's overt sensuality, which caught them off guard. They played along until the amusement turned sour. When an aggressor used a quick sword motion, Surpanakha who had been the predator and they the prey became the victim.

Although Surpanakha knew that Ravan would go to war, Ravan had other plans. First, Ravan dispatched members of his family to fight. Every battle resulted in the deaths of Ravan's men. In the conflict, Surpanakha lost her nephew and her cousins. It was all due to her getting back at Ravan. As Vibishan has stated, they began to lose the war day by day. The only option left to Ravan is to awaken Kumbha. She didn't want for this to happen; she just wanted Ravan to pass away out of all the members of her family. They had a larger number. Kumbha was aware of Surpanakha's strategy. She was challenged by him, who warned her that it was too late to back out and that she would be responsible for saving her family.

Kumba was killed on the battlefield as the war dragged on day after day. Surpanakha felt bad for the man. Kumbha was aware that what Ravan was doing was wrong, yet he did not act. In his entire life, he has never stopped him. It wasn't until that day that Ravan joined the conflict. All of his family members were being sent. The second factor in his family's salvation was him. The following fighter to enter battle was Meghnad. Meghnad's strength allowed him to stroke

Lakshman during their initial conflict. However, Lakshman killed him the following day. He was killed by Lakshman using the Indrastra. Mandodari was devastated to learn that all of her sons had passed away. Ravan was the sole cause of the deaths of every man in her family, and it was all due to him. As soon as Surpanakha learned of Meghnad's passing, she lost all hope. She treated him as his own child even though he was the family's firstborn. She reflected to herself that Meghnad was not the kind of son Ravan deserved. The others wouldn't have needed to perish if he had entered the fray on the first day and engaged Ram as she had anticipated. He had consented to the deaths of his brother, his nephews, his cousins, and all seven of his sons.

Surpanakha has heard the news she had been waiting to hear. "Ravan is no more," She had been awaiting this particular time. The family's women were saturated as they sat in the corridor. Surpanakha witnessed Kaikesi, her mother, being torn to bits. It's time for her to depart now that she has what she wants. She was aware that Lakshman accidentally killed her son Kumar, but she still intended to take revenge on him. Ayodhya was her next destination.

Surpanakha went about Ayodhya's streets while disguised as Chandra. She held a position as a palace maid. As Lakshman killed her son, her only goal was to kill him and his son as well. She was the one who spread the rumour about Sita's chastity. Ram behaved more like a ruler than a husband. He requested that his brother leave his wife, who was pregnant, in the jungle. Ram and Sita were separated, as Surpanakha planned, and she now had one task to complete.

When Surpanakha was in Urmila's room one evening, she noticed Lakshman's child in the cradle. She just wanted to strangle him to death after seeing him resting sweetly. Before doing it, Lakshman and Urmila both took note of her. He killed her kid, according to

Surpanakha, and she planned to exact revenge on him and his child. Lakshman recalled the occasion in which he had murdered an innocent man. That it was her child was unknown to him.

“It was a terrible sight, like a man gasping for breath, hope sapping away, smothering in despair. He stood uneasily still like a tree about to be felled and it was on Urmila’s gentle touch on his shoulder that he moved. He stared at Surpanakha and never had she seen such tortured eyes, smouldering with charged emotions flitting on his anguished face: remorse and repentance, guilt and penitence. To witness that rush of those emotion was like a watching a dying man, his heart ripped open and bleeding, baring his soul. It unnerved her, like a long, gushing wound with the gurgle of blood spurting out. She almost stepped back, flinching. She had been expecting wrath and loathing in his eyes, like she was used to. Instead, what she saw left her floundering. In the background, she could vaguely see Urmila’s pale face, her wide eyes, agonized, restraining Lakshman’s arm yet protecting him, steadying him as he swayed slightly.” (*LP 287-288*)

After learning the horrible reality, Lakshman was willing to make the ultimate sacrifice. Although Surpanakha was prepared to murder Lakshman, she was at a loss for what to do. Urmila wasn't prepared to witness her husband's passing. Lakshman claimed that the memory was haunting him for a long time. He had two options: kill himself or let Surpanakha to kill him. This caused Surpanakha's thoughts to shift.

Although she was a heartless person who killed her entire family, she secretly wished none of these things had occurred. Due to the circumstances, she has become Surpanakha instead of Meenakshi, who she once was. She apologised to Lakshman for his error as her final act. She

left Ayodhya after that because she had nothing else to do there. She travelled on foot from Ayodhya to Lanka. She perished in the water, and Lanka's seashore is where her body was discovered. In Lanka, Vibishan honourably laid her to rest. This was the tale of a small child who had not received loving care and treatment.

The change from the helpless Meenakshi to the fierce Supernakha, who yields to no one, is highlighted in Kane's tale. She is misunderstood and despised for her unbreakable character and is more of a victim than a victimizer. The patriarchy not only dictates gender binaries, but also establishes boundaries for what is appropriate and inappropriate within a certain society. Because of her sexual aptitude and proclivities, Surpanakha is othered as a woman in the gender space, making her the antithesis of the ideal woman.

Women are frequently portrayed as the root of strife in mythology. Helen is frequently referred to as Sita, Supernakha, and Draupadi, as well as the destroyer of Troy, Eve, and the reason why mankind is denied access to paradise. This propensity to blame women for everything because chaos and devastation are revisited in the story. In essence, it is claimed that the Ramayana was a war conducted to free Sita from Ravana. Supernakha, the princess of Lanka, is portrayed in the epic as being the main instigator of the carnage. The drive to position oneself as the supreme authority, rather than women, is frequently the hidden motivation behind this bloodshed.

The men are not ignored in the novel's portrayal of the condition of women. The younger brothers of Ravan and Ram, Kumbha, Vibhishan, and Lakshman, are constantly incited to fight regardless of their personal convictions. After Ravan's death, Kumbha accepts his own demise order. Due to the ongoing humiliation he endures at the hands of his elder brother, Vibhishan,

whose relationship with Ravan was already fragile, betrays Ravan. When Lakshman learned that Kumar was Surpanakha's son, the guilt he felt for killing Kumar, which he had inflicted on Surpanakha on Ram's orders came to a head and drove him to commit suicide.

If mythology has the capacity to strengthen preconceptions, it also demonstrates the ability to erase them, as shown by the numerous revisions of myths that reflect a shared desire to broaden perspectives in order to foster an inclusive one that will not only enrich the epics but also give us a keen understanding of the society we live in. By raising the voice of the excluded and highlighting fluidity and openness to see past the hard binary framework, revisit it, and uncover the reality disguised by the dominant voices, Kane successfully subverts the strict binary structure. Through Surpanakha in *Lanka's Princess*, Kavita Kane has demonstrated the veracity of these assertions.

“The story of *Lanka's Princess* illustrates what would occur if someone were to damage a woman's life and end up losing their entire tribe. Through the character of Surpanakha in *Lanka's Princess*, Kavita Kane has demonstrated the truth of these assertions.” (126-127)

Chapter III

The Unheard Voice of Urmila

According to the stories from mythology the role of a woman is to provide for a man and have children. The power given to a woman does not sound considerable aside from carrying out the primary functions of carrying on his lineage and assisting him in carrying out his compulsory obligations. When considering the goddesses' heavenly roles, these concepts clash are examined in these legends. Women, however, are given supporting roles while men play the primary characters. The responsibilities of her husband's obligations fall to the woman. A woman is required to fulfill a variety of responsibilities, including those of mother, wife, daughter-in-law, sister, daughter, and so forth. She must comply with the demands of the entire family.

Ram, Sita, Lakshman's greatness is showed in Ramayana as they go for 14 years of exile. But what happened to Ayodhya and their family as they leave to stay in forest. Who looked after their family? As everyone talks about these three people sufferings and pain, no one don't pay attention to Urmila. She is the most overlooked character in this story. She is left alone in the palace as her husband and sister leaves without her. Retelling stories has been normal these days but everyone tend to speak about Sita and what she went through. But what about the other women who were in the family?

Sita's beauty and her chastity are being praised by everyone. All even worship her because she is the daughter of Mother Earth. When Sita had the thought of going with her husband on exile, why did Urmila have to stay in the palace in Ayodhya? Why didn't she accompany her husband? Kavita's *Sita's Sister* gives a new version of Ramayana on Urmila's

perspective. Urmila is the least character anyone could focus on in Ramayana. WThis study shows the voice of Urmila. will be hearing the voices of Urmila who has no choice but to stay within the four walls in her room.

In Ramayana , Urmila married into the same household as her sister Sita. Both of them marry the brothers. Nothing but their love for one another grew as a result of having to coexist in the same palace even after getting married. The exile is made known to Urmila. She is surprised to learn that Lakshaman will accompany him on his exile. Because the home is where the heart is and Ram was her heart, Sita then follows her husband on his exile. Although what she did as a wife was right, Urmila stayed because of it. Urmila did not travel with her husband, but she awaited his return for 14 years in the palace.

This study shows the reason why Urmila stayed behind and did not accompany her husband in Kavita's novel. It all began when she was a young girl, playing with her cousins Mandavi and Shrutakirti, as well as her sister Sita. In Mithila, she lived the ideal existence. King Janak and Queen Susaina gave birth to her. Sita was the adopted kid, and Urmila was born a year later. However, nobody in the palace treated Sita differently because Urmila always regarded her as the nicest gift she had ever received. From their earliest years, the four sisters shared a home. This caused them to develop a unique bond.

They couldn't be separated. The sane one who holds the others like glue is Urmila. Compared to the others, she was older. Because they assumed Sita must feel left out, her mother and father showed her greater affection. Urmila didn't care because she liked Sita in any case. She used to pick fights and play with her and treated her like her own sister. Sita was the only

person who could effortlessly lift Shiva's bow when she was 10 years old. She was unique among others because of this.

The four sisters grew closer as the years went by. There was only one week until Sita's swayamvar. Urmila observed Sita's lack of enthusiasm for her swayamvar. She didn't want to lose contact with Sita. The only person she truly loved was Sita. When Urmila learned that Vishwamitra and the two princes of Ayodhya had travelled to Mithila, she assumed they were there to attend the philosophy conference. Urmila is familiar with the tales of the two princes. They were revered as the great warriors who defeated a number of demons in the Dandaka forest.

Since a few days ago, Sita has been mute because nothing seems to interest her. To assist her in choosing the jewellery for her swayamvar, Urmila went looking for Sita. Urmila suddenly sensed that something wasn't right when Sita entered the room. At that point, Sita revealed that she had been speaking with Ram, the prince of Ayodhya. Urmila witnessed her sister have her first romantic feelings and blush. But she soon had her swayamvar.

The legendary Shiv dhanush was the target of Sita's swayamvar, which her father established. The only man who succeeds in breaking it will win Sita's hand. The former Vishnu was the owner of Shiv dhanush. It took hundreds of men to simply roll that away; it was not an easy thing to carry. Sita lifted the bow with one hand when she was young, shocking her family as a whole. So Janak made the judgment that a guy who breaks the bow will be deserving of her daughter's hand in marriage.

Urmil always had concern for her sister and didn't want her to suffer any harm. She was aware that Sita loved Ram, but she was concerned that she might wed someone else since Ram

and his brother weren't there at the wedding. Urmila wasn't particularly religious, but she wanted to go to the temple with Sita so that she wouldn't be anxious when she meets Ram. Early preparation allowed Urmila and Sita to leave for the shrine. The four sisters observed the Ayodhya princes travelling when they all left for the temple. She had never seen Ram and Lakshman before, so they exchanged greetings.

“Lakshman stood rigid and unsmiling as the short conversation flowed between Ram and her. He looked distinctly impatient, his lips curled in slight annoyance. He was as tall as Ram, slimmer and more lithe and unbelievably handsome in a craggy way; but without the likeable, pleasing good looks of his elder brother. He had a saturnine, chiselled face with a thin, crooked nose and deep, smouldering eyes, but the perpetual, glowering frown marred his handsomeness. He stood taut and wired, as if ready to spring at the slightest pretext. He suddenly looked at her with his dark, piercing eyes and she felt herself go warm, then cold. It was not his eyes, darkly luminous and jet black, but it was the regard. His gaze seemed to go right through the bone. Urmila shivered.” (SS 19)

When Sita saw Ram, she didn't try to hide her emotions from the world. But finally, the other two sisters learned the truth. Sita wasn't sure of her emotions. She didn't want to fall in love with him because she was getting married soon. She was afraid that if she didn't get him, her feelings would never go away and that it would be the same as cheating on her partner. In the swayamvar, Urmila made sure that she would be present and assist her. Even though Urmila was only a year younger than her sisters, she served as Sita's anchor, keeping her connected to the reassuring realism of her own life. Her sweetheart and support system was Urmila.

They continued to meet the two princes every morning in the garden for the following five days. However, the talk quickly dried up and was replaced by evocative stares and the traditional silent greetings as well as short grins. Sita bent her head in order to cover the rising colour whenever Ram grinned. Similar to how he felt, Urmila was miserable. She attempted to disguise the uncomfortable by lowering her head out of respect, but every time she disliked herself for sneaking a glimpse at the younger sibling. And each time, she noticed his hard eyes on her, his wide-open, steady look soaking her in an ocean of mixed emotions. Urmila felt confident in her lack of shyness, but she realised that her nerves had suddenly given out and that her lips was locking up with the words she wanted to say. Her mouth and throat started to dry out, and she noticed that her tongue started to move sensually across her parched lips.

The moment has arrived when Sita will learn who she will wed. Sita was less anxious than Urmila was. Princes from every nation have attended the swayamvar. While Sita and Urmila were observing the prince, Ram was the focus of Sita's attention. A large, muscular, lumbering figure caught Urmila's attention among the many rulers in the hall. It belonged to Ravan, the ruler of Lanka. He was quickly identified as being seated next to her father. Urmila had vowed to herself that she would not look at Lakshman during the swayamvar, hardening her heart and will to do so. However, in just a few moments, Urmila had broken her self-imposed rule.

Everyone first noticed Ravan moving towards the bow. Because Ravan had large, undesirable eyes, Urmila didn't want him to wed Sita. Everyone anticipated Ravan to break the bow because he is a huge follower of Lord Shiva. To everyone's surprise, however, Ravan was unable to move at all. He wasn't prepared to endure the embarrassment. He admitted defeat and requested Janak's daughter's hand in marriage. Considering he was the only powerful king, he

believed that if he could not raise the bow, no one else would have a chance. King Janak declined his invitation and demanded to see whether any other men could raise the bow. Ravan became enraged and departed from Mithila.

After the powerful Ravan was vanquished, many defeated rulers quietly left the raj sabha without daring to take a chance. Many monarchs, princes, and nobility complied and made an effort to raise the bow. Nobody could move it even an inch. All of them went back to their seats, humiliated and defeated. Urmila gave Sita her word that Ram would draw the bow and earn her hand. One of the kings, who had just defeated everyone, declared that no one in this chamber would be able to use the bow since it would be difficult, thus he wanted to wed Urmila. Due to their presence here to wed the princess, every other king and prince agreed with him. Urmila felt uneasy hearing this comment. She didn't want to get married to any of the prince.

There was an explosion of activity, and Urmila saw Lakshman, the man who had captured her heart, mind, passion, and feeling for all these days, slowly rising. His face was covered in a dark mask of icy rage. Urmila observed Lakshman get up and moving towards the bow. He approached King Janak for permission, claiming that his brother had the strength to pull the bow. As Janak concurred, Ram rose to his feet and received Vishwamitra's benediction.

All eyes were on the little prince in hopeful anticipation as the room was eerily quiet. Ram handled the bow with reverence as he glanced into the iron casing. He slowly drew and took up the bow as if it were a delicate floral garland with his right palm cupped around the centre of the bow. Urmila was filled with joy as she instantly saw the small, slight Sita holding the bow in her right hand.

“Lifting it high, Ram proceeded to rest one end of the bow against his big toe; he bent it and strung it, quickly drawing the string back. Urmila heard Sita gasp with unsuppressed delight and saw Ram throw Sita a long, exultant look. Probably he was distracted, his focus momentarily diverted or he had under-estimated his strength but with a swift, overpowering force, he pulled at the bow and it snapped like a dry branch with a booming clap like a flashing thunder streak.” (SS 35)

The look on Sita's face eluded Urmila's words. Her gently shining eyes and little, shy grin, which gave out a huge, overwhelming delight, made it luminous. But Ram raising the bow did not sit well with Sunaina, her mother. Anyway, Sunaina gave her daughter a blessing while crying. Ram's attractive head was covered with the garland as a tremendous interruption interrupted Sita's work. A tall, towering guy, a rishi, was visible in Urmila's vision as a shadow against the doorway's frame. Urmila could tell that he was angry no, incensed even from a distance. Each step of his deliberate approach to her father echoed with a furious violence.

He was Rishi Parshuram, the chiranjeevi rishi who was invincible and who no one on earth could overcome. He was the Brahmakshatriya, the first Brahmin warrior, who received an axe as a gift from Shiva to use as a weapon. This is where he obtained his infamous and hated name. The fact that the bow had broken enraged him. He desired to exact revenge on the bow-breaker. Lakshman's entrance angered him further. Urmila witnessed everything and arrived promptly. When the rishi was approached for his blessing, he said that her husband would live a long life. Parshuram then raised his axe to strike Lakshman, but his own words prevented him from doing so. Urmila executed her plan with skill. She just saved him.

Urmila already liked Lakshman, despite the fact that they never spoke. She found it impossible to look away from him. Ram came to Parshuram and claimed that he had broken the bow and would be prepared to accept the punishment before anyone could comment on what she had done. After witnessing Vishwamitra standing next to Ram, Parshuram became calm and stopped arguing. Urmila glanced quickly around her, hoping no one had spotted her misadventure, still shivering from the close call. She had let her emotions out by acting on her irrational desire at the raj sabha. And while Lakshman had saved her from a violent predicament, so had she, snatching Lakshman from death. In saving each other, they had, inadvertently, professed their love for each other, a love they had denied for long, even to themselves.

They informed Ayodhya of Ram and Sita's wedding as soon as possible. The Urmila family was happier than ever. The Janak messenger took roughly three days to travel to Ayodhya and deliver the good news. Dashrath immediately replied with a message expressing his joy at the fortunate turn of circumstances. It took a further three days for the messenger to travel back to Mithila with the Ayodhya response. The six days that followed were possibly the longest, most perplexing, and most significant days of Urmila's life. Urmila had been fantasising and worrying about Lakshman for the past few days, and now it appeared that all of her sisters were aware of her secret thoughts.

After the swayamvar, Ram had settled in beautifully with the family, his charm disarming, and his affection infectious. In an odd way, Urmila found both her elder sister and Ram incredibly alike. A single definition could well describe them both. They were good-natured, friendly, and always cheerful. Their love was true and unhampered by false pride and self-importance. Urmila watched fondly as she saw them smiling, chatting and laughing together. Urmila didn't know whether she has fallen for the right guy. He always seemed cold and she

never got the chance to speak with him. But she knows that he'll be the one who she's marrying. She tried to communicate with him but all the time he cut her with cold bitterness, this made her to question whether he is the right one for her.

Sita was running behind schedule when it came time for the daily ritual at the Gauri shrine. Urmila kept seeking for her sister, but she was nowhere to be seen. Urmila believes that her sister must have left already and gone to the garden. She had almost reached the denser area of the garden after walking for almost a furlong when she spotted Sita. She was by herself and about to make a call when she saw Ram approaching from a distance. Lakshman was a bit ahead of him, moving quickly and alertly. She suddenly noticed him pausing and signaling to Ram to stop walking by extending his right arm. She saw Lakshman swivel around, catch sight of the approaching Sita and without a moment's hesitation take aim at her and shoot her down with his arrow.

Urmila attempted to approach Sita when she saw this, but Lakshman quickly caught her. She was urged not to approach her by him. Due to the fact that he killed her sister, Urmila was not in a state to pay attention. The ground was covered in blood. Urmila attempted to use the dagger he had to murder Lakshman, but he tackled her to the ground and said that it wasn't her sister, but rather a monster in disguise. She released his grasp gradually.

“‘She is not Sita, Mila!’ she heard him say softly, almost gently, his eyes tender. Urmila's eyes widened in shock. ‘It's someone else in her guise,’ he whispered, his face close. She squirmed as she felt his lips move on her skin. ‘And I shall let you go if you promise not to attack me again with that brandishing dagger so that

I can find out who did this,' he released her saying that, letting go of her wrists suddenly." (SS 49)

Urmila saw the struggling body and Lakshman tried to get truth out of it. Then she saw her sister Sita and her cousins rushing towards her. Lakshman raised his arm high in warning, and the girls stopped running, standing close to Ram, who had been watching the spectacle mutely all this while. All of them were gazing down at Sita's lookalike. She was still gasping for breath, struggling to resume her original form. He was a demon, a dying, desperate demon. He was a demon that has sent to kill Sita and Ram. Urmila was relieved that Lakshman has saved them from big disaster.

Six days later, a messenger arrived from Ayodhya and Janak summoned the four girls for an immediate discussion. This was indeed not exceptional in the palace of Mithila. Janak always conferred, not just with his wife and younger brother, but with his daughters and nieces as well, before taking any major decision. It was a family tradition that all valued, appreciated and respected. King Dasrath wanted the rest of the sisters to marry his next three sons;

Lakshman for Urmila, Bharat for Mandavi and lastly, Shatrughna for Shrutakirti. Urmila was the first one to be happy about this decision because she was marrying Lakshman and she get to be with her sisters for the rest of her life. But for her surprise Mandavi was not ready to marry a guy that she never met. As for Kriti, she was okay with King Janak's decision.

Urmila observed her mother Sunaina's displeasure over marrying the girls to their living-together brother. She was concerned that their relationship with their sisters would falter in various circumstances. Urmila reassured her, though, that no matter how challenging the circumstances become, she and her sisters will stand together.

Despite her courageous comments, Urmila was unsure of the conditions that their future might impose on her and her sisters. Will they remain a unit no matter what happens? Will their husbands be prioritised over them by the sisters? Would the brothers be persuaded by their love for their wives or would they stick up for one another at the expense of their wives? These were the thoughts Urmila couldn't stop having. Urmila had experienced the dilemma which her mother was so fearful about, and like her mother, Urmila did not like what it portended.

Although the engagements of all the sisters were formally set, Urmila wanted to speak to Lakshman about their engagement. While strolling across the garden with her sisters, Urmila heard Lakshman's voice. He was telling his brother that he didn't really want to marry Urmila and wasn't all that interested in this marriage. Urmila's heart dropped as she heard this because she was unable to handle his harsh words any longer. She made an attempt to get out of the area, but Lakshman caught sight of her and followed her. She continued to run into the dense forest before collapsing into a heap. She started crying over what she had just learned, over having loved and trusted him. She was unwilling to see him once more.

A rustling sound startled her back to consciousness after she had been sitting there for hours. She turned around, and Lakshman was in front of her. Urmila wasn't in the mood to hear him out when he tried to explain what he wanted to convey. After this, she had no desire to wed him.

“I love you, Mila. And I am saying this now as I am not afraid to say so. It was this fear of losing you that forbade me to never utter those words. You were too beautiful, too good to make me hope you would be accessible or accept my love. I have been in love with you from that beautiful moment when I saw you looking at

me haughtily in the garden with that pooja thali in your hands. And nothing has been the same ever again. Not me, my peace of mind, my principles, my promises. You have taken away my heart, my pride, my everything...but what can I give you? Nothing but sorrow and heartache. I cannot promise you happiness. And that's why I cannot marry you. I shouldn't. And that is what I was telling Ram.” (SS 65)

Lakshman felt he didn't deserve Urmila's affection and didn't want to marry her. He believed he would be unable to show her the affection she deserves. He believed that because he had already offered her to his brother Ram, he would not be able to give her to her. For Lakshman, Ram is his god, and serving and guarding him is the reason he is even here.

This was true up until he met her, after which he fell in love. But something kept shifting, and he feared that his love for her would drive Ram away from him. He didn't want to marry her since he wouldn't be able to give her his complete affection if he did. At last he said that if there is a situation where he has to choose her or his brother, he would definitely choose his brother over her. He thought she deserved someone who can love her to the fullest.

Urmila was convinced after hearing all of the reasons why that he loved her and that led to their marriage. Although she is aware that she will suffer the consequences, she is okay with it. She promised herself that there would never be a circumstance where Lakshman would choose one of them. Lakshman was persuaded by Urmila that she won't mind if Ram is chosen over her. She only desired his company. She was aware that if she had to decide between Lakshman and Sita, Sita would be her first choice. They both had a great deal of love for their siblings.

Lakshman tried to convince her in every way but Urmila was not ready to give him up after knowing that he loves her too. She convinced him to marry her and she will be okay if he ends up in a situation where he chooses Ram but deep down she knew that would never happen. Lakshman agreed to marry her too but what Urmila was about to do is going to change her life. Will she be okay if her husband chooses over her? Will there be a situation where she will be separated from him?

“‘The love between the four princes borders on devotion, especially the younger brothers’ dedication to Ram,’ she said. ‘They would do anything for him and vice versa. Lakshman’s devotion is more overt, more visible, because he wears it as an emblem. The others, I am sure, would do the same, if the situation arose. There is this infrangible thread of allegiance that binds them together, and now what Lakshman is warning Urmila of, can be true for us too, Mandavi,’ continued Kirti grimly. ‘That if such a situation were to merge, where any of them would have to choose between his wife and the brother, it will be the brother they will opt for. It would do well if the wife always keeps this in mind.’” (SS 75)

Women frequently favour the man they love over everything else. Even though they were aware that there would eventually be an issue, the four sisters decided to wed the four brothers. Women won't have any problems in life if the men they love are with them. They only need their love and support. Even if they do horrible crimes, they will still love them. They believe that is what they deserve. They believe that the love they receive from them, whether it is more or less, is what they should receive. Rishi Shantanand foretold that if Sita marries Ram, she will spend the most of her married life in the jungle and suffer much from separation; therefore Sunaina was prepared to call off the wedding. So, she opposed her getting married to Ram. Her mother feared

for the safety of her young daughter. Sita didn't change her mind since she didn't want to lose Ram despite all these factors. She was prepared to deal with all the difficulties that were ahead because she loved him so much. She was not prepared to marry any other man if it wasn't Ram. Since Urmila had experienced the same thing, she was able to relate to her. She tends to marry Lakshman even though she knows he will never love her as much as she does. She was willing to deal with the discomfort since she loved him so much. She didn't want to be without him, and if something went wrong, she was willing to take all the risks.

The following day, Bharat and Shatrughna travelled to Mithila with King Dasrath. They ran into Mandavi and Kriti in the temple. The four ladies got up on a gloomy, cold day to get ready for their weddings, unaware of these pessimistic prophecies. The marriages of the four sisters took place in Mithila. Urmila learned that Ram had an elder sister named Shanta, but that King Rompad and Vershini had received Shanta since they had been childless for a very long period. King Dasrath and Kausalya were great friends; therefore Dasrath gave Rompad his own daughter as a gift. The four couples appeared content after getting married, and the following day, they were preparing to travel to Ayodhya.

Urmila was struck by Ayodhya's splendour. She has never seen a palace as large as this one, nor has her sister. The chief queen Kaikeyi, who was Dasrath's favourite of the three queens, greeted everyone. Though she greeted everyone, Kaikeyi surrounded Sita. All the sisters were upset by this. Although Urmila is the legitimate princess of Mithila, she didn't abandon her sister. The four brides were welcomed by the city of Ayodhya with joy and charm, something Urmila was not experiencing at the time. While she was grinning in return for the kindness shown to her, it felt as though the palace walls were closing in on her and her sisters. She was particularly concerned for Sita after the rude treatment given to her by Kaikeyi.

The next day it got even worse, Kaikeyi was not happy Ram being married to Sita. She refused to accept her as bride. Kaikeyi wanted Ram to get married to another but Ram didn't want to leave Sita for any other women and this changed the idea about Sita to Kaikeyi. Then they never spoke about Ram getting married again.

In the palace, the four sisters were having a fantastic time. As they spent time together, they were conversing. And as they gradually began to discuss how everyone preferred Ram to Barath. Even though everyone preferred Ram, she believed that the two boys were identical in every way. Urmila understood the purpose behind Mandavi's rising of the subject. Manthara, Kaikeyi's maid, has fed Mandavi with her words. She is regarded as the palace's most poisonous woman.

With the exception of Mandavi, Kaikeyi, and Barath, everyone was aware of her and her ill-gotten thoughts. Recently, there has been discussion regarding the crown prince. Everyone thought that it would be Ram, but Manthara preferred that Barath assume the throne. That is why she has been planting the evil ideas in Mandavi's which she is not aware of.

The sisters' talk slowly turned into a fight. Urmila understood exactly what Mandavi was saying. In order for Mandavi to rule as queen of Ayodhya, she desired that Barath become the king. Urmila attempted to stop the dispute, but Mandavi cut her off by claiming that Sita was not one of them and should not be regarded as the ruler of Ayodhya. What Mandavi had just stated startled the three sisters. As soon as Mandavi realised what she had just said, she quietly exited the room. Urmila was now aware of the number of negative thoughts Manthara had implanted in Mandavi's mind. Manthara was constantly under Urmila's watchful eye, and she made sure that she did not manipulate others.

After the heated disagreement, Mandavi avoided talking to the sisters altogether. She never met them for a conversation because she was constantly in her room. Urmila was concerned for Mandavi and eager to make amends with her, but she was still awaiting her arrival. They were eager to meet Barath and Shatrughna with their spouses after hearing that Kaikeyi had fallen unwell. In order to meet King Aswapati, the pair departed. Urmila was even more upset by this because she was unable to say goodbye to her sister or communicate with Mandavi.

Ram will become the crown prince, and the ceremony will take place tomorrow, according to Lakshman, who hurriedly entered their quarters. King Dasrath made this choice and wanted it carried out right now. With Barath and Shatrughna gone, they can't declare Ram the crown prince, and Urmila realised this wasn't good. She was aware that the situation would turn out disastrously. Even though Urmila was aware that Kaikeyi wanted Barath to rule as king, she was hoping for the best.

Urmila was in a hurry to make Sita ready for the ceremony. Everyone was assembled for the ceremony. Urmila missed Mandavi and Kriti, she wanted them to be in this auspicious day. Everyone was waiting for the ceremony to begin but Urmila couldn't find the King and the chief queen. They were nowhere else to be seen, this made her more anxious. Before the ceremony Ram was summoned to meet the King in his chambers. Everyone didn't know what was going on. Ram returned after an hour later and he was not wearing any of his royal jewels and he had a sad expression on his face. Urmila knew that worst has happened.

Ram broke the news that Ram would spend the next 14 years in exile in the forest while his father wanted Barath to be the crown prince. Nobody knew what had happened in the King's room, so everyone was in a state of shock when he made his statement. It was Kausalya who

appeared to be physically broken. Ram was her only hope because she had never been treated as nicely as Kaikeyi and had never been her husband's favourite. She was unsure about what she would do when her kid moved out.

Queen Kaikeyi has used her two boons which were given by King Dasrath in the battlefield for saving his life. She used one of her boons to make Barath as king and other to send Ram on exile. Ram was prepared to live in exile for 14 years in order to carry out his father's command. Lakshman was forced to follow his brother everywhere he went after learning that his other half, who is his brother, is going into exile.

While Urmila was unprepared for this phase and had no idea what to do, she had always known that Lakshman would always be Ram's servant. She was aware of this and still chose to wed him, but she had no idea that this would actually occur. Sita made it apparent while she was thinking that she would go to the wilderness with her husband. She cared less about where they lived before they were married because she loved her husband so much.

Urmila couldn't believe that Sita and Lakshman would be leaving her behind for 14 years and that the two people she loved most on earth had never thought of her. Urmila was depressed and enraged at the same time. Like Sita, she desired to be with her husband and longed to go with him. Lakshman came to their chambers to explain his decision to accompany his brother, saying that he did so in order to safeguard him as he had always done. Urmila could go with him, but it would make him distracted and make it impossible for him to perform his duties and look after his wife at the same moment.

“I cannot take you with me because I love you too much...not too less as you think,’ he was saying tenderly, holding her hands and turning her wrists out to

stroke them absently with his thumb. ‘It’s not easy in the forest. Ram is taking Sita because he knows he will be able to protect her. I am going as his guard, so how will I be able to look after you or protect you? And more importantly, you are safer here in the palace. The forest is not a safe place, and it’s not just the physical hardship I am talking about. I know you can suffer that gladly. Dandaka is now especially dangerous with the demons, having captured it, throwing out or murdering the rishis, disrupting their penance. And you have seen how treacherous they can be, Mila! Don’t you remember how they entered the Mithila palace and took the form of Sita? Everyone was fooled. Even you! Then how can I take you with me to such a place and expose you to danger?’ he said violently.”

(SS 143-144)

Urmila knew the reason behind Lakshman’s decision but she wanted to go with him as Sita did. She knew that forest would be the most dangerous place to stay, Ram would look after Sita and Lakshman would look after both Ram and Sita. If Urmila goes along with Lakshman, he will be able to look after her and not his brother. She was not able to let go of Lakshman, she wanted to be with him.

This whole idea of going on exile made her angry. She was angry on Sita for not considering her and leaving her all alone in this palace. She would have her family her side but what she wanted Sita and Lakshman most. She wanted Lakshman either to stay or take her along. Laskshman refused her offer and he decided to go on exile with his brother. Now Urmila’s love has become painful and bitter. All she could do is to stay in this palace for 14 years and wait for her husband to return.

The following day, Urmila was about to bid her sister and her husband farewell. She didn't want to bid them farewell. When the three departed from the palace, Urmila was devastated. When she realised she wouldn't see Lakshman for the subsequent 14 years, she felt hurt. They departed. King Dasrath felt ill and regretted. He believed that his son leaving for exile was his fault. This idea made him feel worse. He soon learned what Kaikeyi's true colour was. Although Kausalya was the one who cared for her husband, she was unable to let go of the wrongs he had committed against her son. The women in the palace were the one who suffered more as Ram and Lakshman went on exile.

As Ram, Sita, and Lakshman departed into the forest, Urmila was left to take care of the family. The King's condition weakened daily. He spent the remainder of the day in Kausalya's living spaces since he didn't want to see Kaikeyi. Despite caring for King Dasrath, Ma Kausalya grew weaker as the days went by. Dasrath always had a soft spot in his heart for his second wife, but it was now she who tore this family apart. He neglected the one who was watching after him. He felt guilty for what he had done and for having heard Kaikeyi.

Barath was about to return, and Queen Kaikeyi was preparing for his coronation the following day. They were still ignorant of Ram. But the following day, King Dasrath passed away. Funeral services won't begin until Barath and Shatrughna arrive. Everyone was in mourning, and Kausalya was broken and fell ill as well. When Shanta learned what had happened during the previous few weeks, she hurried to Ayodhya and was enraged with Kaikeyi. She also didn't want Barath to become as king. Urmila was in charge of handling the judicial and political matters until Barath's return.

Barath and the rest finally made it to Ayodhya. Before seeing Kriti and Shatrughna, Urmila was able to tell them what had happened. Both of them were stunned after hearing the news, and she then noticed Mandavi rushing her way to seek assistance. When Urmila arrived at Kaikeyi's palace, she discovered Barath on the chilly floor.

Due to his mother, Barath had lost his sibling, which caused him pain. Never in his life did Barath wish to be the crown prince. He was dedicated to Ram and had always wanted him to inherit the throne. Barath was furious with his mother for banishing Ram so that his son may inherit the throne. Barath became to know about Manthara and her game she played with his mother to make him as the prince. Barath sent her to the dark dungeon as for what she did.

Barath was not able to forgive his mother for sending Ram on exile. He got into a huge fight with her and made himself promise that he would not talk with her. Kaikeyi did not expect this from her son. Barath was the only one she loved the most and she lost him forever. Kaikeyi soon realized her mistake. As she knew that Manthara who manipulated her on sending Ram on exile, she was not able to forgive her.

Barath was unwilling to accept the throwing. He believed Ram was the true owner and that nobody else should have it. He declared that he would wait 14 years before coming back to assume the throne. But Urmila reasoned that this was the wrong course of action. It would be simpler for other groups to seize a throne without a king.

Urmila took charge of the situation; she managed the court and prompted Barath to think about ascending to the throne. Since Manthara had planned everything, and since Ram's father had also passed away, Barath wished to return Ram to his family. Everyone agreed with the plan,

but Urmila believed Ram would object and insult his father by returning. She didn't know whether they would come back or not but she wanted to meet her husband for one last time.

Barath travelled with Kausalya, Kaikeyi, Urmila, and other women to persuade Ram to return to his home. Lakshman was far away when Urmila spotted him. He appeared to be more angry, and the forest had a bit changed him. In their hut, everyone saw Ram, Sita, and Lakshman. Barath was the first to approach Ram and apologise. Everyone eventually broke the news of their father's death and Manthara's plot. As she was the one who sent Ram into exile, Kaikeyi pleaded with Ram to come back to the palace and ascend to the throne. To everyone's amazement, Ram refused because his father had sent him on exile, and he didn't want to break his word.

Ram asked Barath to rule the country until he returns but Barath's answer shocked everyone. He said he would keep Ram's sandals on the throne and through that he will be ruling the country. He would not accept the throne and he never wished for it. While Ram is in forest for 14 years Barath will do his penance as a hermit on the banks of River Sarayu at Nandigram until he returns. Urmila was furious about Barath's decision; she didn't want Mandavi to suffer like she did.

“So be it, Bharat, like your brothers, Ram and Lakshman, you too shall live a life of an ascetic, free from the bond of love and worldly care. Who cares whatever happens to your wife and your family?’ she asked, each word mouthed with cold deliberation. ‘Today, in this room, we have talked about all sorts of dharma—of the father and the sons, of the king and the princes, of the Brahmin and the Kshatriya, even of the wife for her husband. But is there no dharma of the

husband for his wife? No dharma of the son for his mother? Is it always about the father, sons and brothers?" (SS 219)

Ram and Lakshman did what they were required to do, yet their mother and wife are the ones who suffer. Men believe that a wife's duty is to do what her husband does. Is there a husband's duty to care for his wife or his mother, as Urmila stated. The focus has always been on the father and the boys. Do they ever give the feelings of the women in the palace any thought? It's always about the males and what they have to do.

Urmila was aware that she was caught in her own words; she had planned to wed Lakshman despite this knowledge. Women constantly suffer; initially it was Sita, then Urmila, and now Mandavi would be joining them. Is husband's dharma towards wife is to not take any other wife? They refer to it as dharma. They claim that this family always upholds the law and cares for the populace, but inside the palace, the law for women is suppressed and their voices are not heard.

Ram, Sita and Lakshman left the palace to live their lives in forest but they ever consider on whom their leaving behind. Did they think about their mother and the pain they would suffer? Barath punish his mother by not talking to her for what she did but why Mandavi does have to be separated by him for what he decided. Is it because the duty of a wife is to follow her husband? Why does it always have to be the women to suffer? From the beginning everyone got the idea that women should follow what a husband does.

At first they should follow their parent's words and then their husband, why can't women make her own decision. In Mithila they have taught them to treat women as equal as the men. Urmila was taught by her parents that women's feelings and their ideas should be

considered by others. But as in Ayodhya they don't even treat them as women with feelings. She didn't get her answer till the end; does the man have no dharma for his wife? But she knew the answer, the answer was no. Men never considered women's feelings.

Months have passed since Urmila last encountered Lakshman in the woods. People in the family have never been the same since that day. Barath left Mandavi behind and went to Nandigram. The court matters were handled by Sathurghna. The family's women experienced anguish and loss. Urmila witnessed the suffering of everyone while remaining silent, but she didn't want the situation to persist till Ram returned. She wanted them to continue being as content as they were. Urmila was enjoying life by holding onto her memories of Lakshman. Urmila took charge of the situation and made the family happy.

Urmila saw to it ensure the family ate together every single day. She saw to it that everyone interacted with one another. Urmila didn't let the fact that nobody tried to talk to Kaikeyi slip away. Every time, she set aside time to speak with Kaikeyi. Her sole responsibility was to prevent this family's death inside. She now has to wait for her husband to come home and take care of this family for the time being. The three sisters regularly had time to be together. Urmila was delighted, but she was most missing Sita.

While her father was dying, Kaikeyi fled Ayodhya. A letter from King Aswapti to her daughter Kaikeyi was sent to Urmila by Kosala. It appeared to be an urgent communication, so Urmila opened it. She learned that Kaikeyi had devised and performed the entire Ram's Exile drama. Ram was destined to kill Ravan, and for that to happen Ram needed to be in the wilderness for 14 years of exile. Kaikeyi sent Ram into exile since she was aware of this. Urmila wanted to make sure that everyone is aware of this because no one was aware of it. She wanted

everyone to understand that everything was part of the plan so they could get to know Kaikeyi's genuine self.

When Kausalya learned that Ram had been involved in the scheme and knew it, she felt bad for Kaikeyi. The family's spirit has since returned. Urmila made certain that nobody in the family was depressed over Ram. The homecoming of Lakshman was the only thing she anticipated more eagerly. The entire family was looking forward to their homecoming.

Her husband would return in only a few more months. When they were about to head back, Urmila learned that Sita had been kidnapped by Ravan. The whole family was astonished by this. They also learned that Ram was preparing to declare war on Lanka in order to preserve Sita. Ram declined Barath's offer to assist him in the battle. Even though Urmila knew Ram would save Sita, she was more concerned about her sister since she didn't want her to become the bait. Women are always used by males as prey, as when Ravan used Sita to avenge Ram. She knew this war was meant to happen but why it is the women who suffer from what the men do?

Every day, Urmila received reports regarding the state of the war. Because she refused to accept Ravan, she was aware that Sita was held in the Ashok garden under the watchful eyes of the women from Ravan's family. They learned that Lanka's entire city had been set on fire by Hanuman. Lakshman was hurt during the war, and Barath arrived with the bad news that he still wasn't awake. Urmila was unable to leave her position. She had been waiting for her partner for so long that she didn't want to lose him in the war.

Lakshman was helped to regain consciousness and heal from his wound by Hanuman. When Hanuman was unable to locate a specific plant that was about to save Lakshman's life, he carried the entire mountain. Now that Urmila had received this good news, all they wanted was

to win the battle. The following day, they learned that Ram had won the conflict by killing Ravan and rescuing Sita. The people of Ayodhya welcomed Ram, Sita, and Lakshman with festivities.

Urmila spent 14 years awaiting for this day. When she saw Lakshman being welcomed, all she wanted was to spend the rest of her life with him. She has gone through enough hardships. Her separation from her husband has caused her a great deal of suffering. When she came across Sita, she embraced her and refused to let go. She now had her husband and her adoring sister, which is everything she wanted. She felt happiness after a long time after Lakshman returned to her.

“The epics and myths portray women as subordinate because they are written by men of the patriarchal society. Moreover, the men enjoyed the pleasure of subjugating women and the reason of subservience did not allow chances of exposure of women to the written scriptures.”

As it is said by Archana Agarwal in her research paper, there is no exposure for women. In myth all they concentrate is men and their duties. Kavita has brought a new way by showing Urmila's character and narrating the epic from her point. Urmila is shown as a young woman with the ability to mask her inner struggles with a forced grin. Although she is skilled at masking her emotions, when the situation calls for it, the importance of her "self" emerges. Without regard for the result or the fallout, Urmila advocated for the rights of women from royal families.

Chapter IV

Conclusion

The history of our society includes mythology. Although not supported by historical evidence, mythology offers a chance to investigate and monitor a society's development. As a result, the representation of female characters in mythology offers a chance to understand the oppressive practises of patriarchal society. The men are portrayed as the idols and heroes of the people, just like in the great epics Mahabarath and Ramayana. They have served as a role model for other males. Women are portrayed as ancillary figures. The sole responsibility of a woman is to support her husband in his ambitions. All have come to the idea that a woman must support her husband and obey him, no matter how awful he is, after hearing all the epics and stories.

The Ramayana is written from Ram's point of view. He is portrayed as the people's hero and God. He is depicted as having initiated the fight to defend his wife. He is regarded as a hero for rescuing Sita from Ravan. However, does anyone bring up Sita? Ram was about to marry her as he tore the Shiv dhanush. And only a few months after they got married, they were banished for 14 years. Sita accompanies her husband during his 14-year exile since that is what an ideal woman should do. Because her husband is the one she loves, she wished to follow him.

Ravan, who was Surpanaka's brother, intended to take revenge on Ram and Lakshman after Lakshman cut Surpanakha's nose. In order to seek revenge, Ravan kidnaps Sita. Why should the woman bear the burden of her husband's mistakes? Despite the fact that Sita shows her husband she loves him by refusing to wed Ravan. Ram ultimately succeeds in saving her, but the narrative doesn't finish there. Her chastity in the presence of Ravan is questioned by Ram. Men often treat women in this manner. In every circumstance, she shows him how much she

cares. Even though he is poor, she still loves him. After all of this, she is asked if she still loves her partner.

Nobody talks about Sita's experiences during her marriage, while she was living in exile with her husband, when she was abducted by Ravan, or when her husband questioned her chastity. Men frequently ignore and fail to see the pain of women. The classic epics were being retold by writers at this time. They began to narrate tales of Sita's distress and Draupathi's suffering. These women were the primary characters of the Ramayana and Mahabarath. But what about the other female companions they had? Their mothers and sisters, what about them? Who talks about their pain? Does anyone consider their feelings?

Kavita Kane concentrates on the Woman all overlooked. Kavita has authored novels about Satyawati, Ahalya, Surpanakha, and Urmila. These are the female characters from mythology that played minor roles. While Sita and her suffering received most of the attention, Urmila's pain was not even been seen when she was also married to Lakshman, who abandoned his wife to join his brother. All were unaware of the extent of her suffering when she was alone. All are aware that Surpanakha was the primary cause of the war, but Kavita explains how she was forced to carry out those actions.

Kavita Kane depicts a distinct version of Surpanakha's narrative in Lanka's Princess. Meenakshi was born into a household that was never loving to her. Neither her mother nor her father ever loved her. On everything from her early life, everyone favoured her brother Ravan. She became enraged by this and developed a hatred for her brother and family. She was not valued by her family, and the only person who truly loved her was her grandma, who passed

away as well. Her relatives referred to her as Surpanakha, a person who wounded others with her long nails. She was only a monster to them.

Ravan desired to rule Lanka, which he eventually accomplished using Meenakshi as reason. She was aware of his desire to rule Lanka, but he used her as an excuse for capturing their city. Everyone feared Ravan since he was the most powerful man in the three worlds, except Meenakshi. She saw him as a self-centered individual who didn't care about other people's sentiments and preferred himself over others.

Meenakshi felt like she was being imprisoned in her own palace; no one dared to approach her or even glance at her due to her brother. She eventually met a man who loved her unconditionally and had a child with him. But soon after, Ravan killed him since he had never been completely honest. When Meenakshi learned that her husband had died, she was broke. She has one desire ever since: to witness Ravan's death.

Meenakshi turned into Surpanakha, the monster she had always been. After Lakshman killed her son, she had nothing to gain or lose. She wished only for Ravan to be put to death. Ram and Lakshman hacked off her nose and ears when she sought to seduce them. She went to her brother and gave him a completely different account so he could create a conflict. She was well aware that nobody would be able to beat Ram, and she desired that Ravan would die in the conflict. She wished Ravan had passed away. She swore under oath to avenge her son's death by killing Lakshman and his kid. However, after witnessing Lakshman admit his mistake, she has a tendency to pardon him for what he done. This was the real Surpanakha, even after knowing her son was killed by him she forgave Lakshman.

Meenakshi was a young child with heart, but because of her family and the circumstances, she became Surpanakha. She harmed her family as a result of them harming her. Nobody ever showed her love or showed concern for her. When she believed she had everything, including her husband who loved her, Ravan took it all. Her son also died in the incident. This was the woman who had suffered total loss.

Instead of avoiding her or rejecting her when Surpanakha tried to seduce Ram and Lakshman, they humiliated her by cutting off her nose and ears. No one should evaluate a woman based on how she looks. These men sliced her nose because they assumed she was a woman who appeared to be a woman of ill repute. According to men, women should be dresses well and should not look at other man but the men can do anything they want with every woman. There are rules for everything, and if a man abides by them, he is seen as a noble man; nevertheless, if a woman does the same, she is subject to judgment.

Ravan's potential was known to Surpanakha, but the family was unable to accept it. Only after learning that Ravan was to blame for the deaths of their family members they came to terms with it. Surpanakha expected her family to embrace her, but all she received was contempt and rejection. Her father was the first member of her family to take all she owned, followed by her husband and son. She was evaluated by looks by everyone. The public has not heard Surpanakha's voice. In this novel Surpanakha was the victim and others were not aware of it.

This shows about Urmila's love for her sister and her sorrow after her husband left her in *Sita's Sister*. Despite the fact that Sita was not her real sister and that she was the daughter of Janak and Susaina, she still loved Sita more. Her sister received more attention from her parents than she did, but she didn't mind. Even though she was aware that Lakshman would prioritise his

brother over her, she nevertheless decided to wed him. She was fine with getting wounded despite being aware of the issue. She loved everyone more than she loved herself; this was just who she was. When her husband made the decision to accompany Ram on his 14-year exile, she tended to remain at the palace. Urmila endured 14 years of silence as a result of Lakshman's abandonment. She didn't want anyone to suffer or be hurt.

Urmila worked hard to make the family happy again following Ram's exile. She was responsible for keeping the family together and content. The family's men never heard or understood the women's suffering. All they wished for was their brother's love and the dharma. Dharma was never observed or mentioned in relation to the sufferings of women. For the women in her family, Urmila fought. She ensured that each person's voice was heard. But she suffered in silence since no one was able to hear her voice. She never let the public see her sufferings. Urmila waited 14 years for her husband to come back. Throughout those 14 years, Urmila only had Lakshman on her mind. Urmila's devotion to Lakshman lasted forever.

“We rarely register the important female characters in our epics or their importance. That’s large because we see them as men-centric stories of war and valor with the women blurred figures in the background. But can you imagine a Mahabharat without Satyawati, Kunti, or Gandhari? Or the Ramayana without Surpanakha, Ahalya, or Mandodari? Besides Sita and Draupadi, the two female protagonists of the respective epics, other women fade in the background though each of them has a reason to exist in the narrative, with each having a fascinating story to tell. Research subsequently revolves around these stories and episodes but forms little nuggets of information. Comparing the social mores of the two eras is futile but these stories from the epics can be used as a huge canvas to throw light

on various contemporary issues. There is enough evidence of how the role of women deteriorated not only in society but also in the family. These stories and the female characters especially became the victims of patriarchy, reducing them to convenient embodiments of conventionality, making them mind-blowingly retrograde. Despite their powerful individual stories, the women characters from our mythology have been largely ignored. Sadly, it is this prejudiced interpretation of mythology that has in a way shaped our concepts about the women of our society. But again we can use these same stories to deconstruct these forgotten or distorted characters, employ them as a creative device to question and contest these very stereotypes” (*Sharing Stories*)

Through these two novels, *Lanka's Princess* and *Sita's Sister* by Kavita Kane, the study is attempting to give Urmila and Surpanakha's unheard voices a platform. The two most overlooked female characters anyone will ever read about are Urmila and Surpanakha in the Ramayana. Their opinions have been suppressed in certain locations while they have attempted to make their points in others. Due of their gender, no one has ever heard them speak.

From this study everyone have come to know about struggle of a woman. As Ram, Sita and Lakshman suffered in jungle, their family suffered while living in the palace too. Surpanakha was the only person who knew who Ravan really was. This study bring out the female voices which have been unheard by everyone by retelling the myths.

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