

# Constructing Consanguinity through Culture in Kavitha Kane's *Sita's Sister*

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## Abstract

Indian English literature is an expression of the profound Indian sensibility and finds its roots in the rich Indian culture. Indian Literature revolves around human actions and the motivation behind the human behavior. The earlier forms of Indian literature were religious. India is a country whose value system is largely dominated by the epics. Kavitha Kane, author of the new era, retelling Indian mythology in contemporary context, brings contemporary feel which makes the narrative more relatable for the present-day readers. Kavitha Kane gives the readers a new outlook and a new lens for viewing the great epics *Ramayan* and *Mahabharat*. The word 'Consanguinity' means family relationship. *Ramayan* demonstrates the highest level of family values. The three types of Family life representing the three forms of civilizations were portrayed in *Ramayan*. They are: Aryan, Vanara and Rakshasha. The Aryan household was at Ayodhya. The Vanara household at Kishkindha and Rakshasha's household at Lanka. This paper tries to analyse the point that how a strong bond of Consanguinity was constructed through culture in Kavitha Kane's *Sita's Sister*.

**Keywords:** *Family, Strong Relationship, Acceptance, Unity etc....*

In *Sita's sister*, the protagonist Urmila has a good and strong family relationship, which supports her to be independent in thought and action. Urmila belonged to Mithila. She loved her sister Sita and cousins Mandavi and Shrutakirti. Daughters are the second mother to the father. King Janak was happy to see his daughter's craziness and laughed at them. Sometimes, he became one among them and played with them. It was the duty of a father to give a better education to his children. King Janak allowed her daughters to learn Vedas and Upanishads. Sita was a master in cooking and Urmila was a great artist. He always encouraged his daughters and motivated them to do good things. As a father, he taught moral values and the importance of family life to his daughters. Her father never hurt them in any way. The relationship between father and daughters was quite inseparable.

The mother-daughter relationship is one of the strongest bond in the world. Queen Sunaina considered the four girls as her own daughters. She never thought Sita, Mandavi or Kirthi as other's children. She was the supporter and the backbone of their happy life. Whenever they needed her, she advised her daughters. When marriage was arranged between Lakshman and Urmila, Lakshman told her that his brother was his first priority and Urmila was his second choice. So, he did not want to hurt Urmila by marrying her. Urmila's love for Lakshman made her to accept being his second choice. Lakshman's love for Urmila made her to bear all sufferings in her life. He wanted to avoid the misunderstanding between them. In order to avoid break up, he expressed everything to her. From this proposal, one can understand that Honesty in relationship is most important for survival of any relation. Trust was the basic element for a strong relationship.

Urmila's mother Sunaina hoped Urmila has the capacity to cleverly manage and handle her family problems. "I know you shall be strong enough to take the right decision and know how to live, and love" (57). Queen Sunaina was proud of her honest son-in-law. A woman was born in one family but married to another family. Their responsibility was to care both their families. The four sisters were married to four princes of Ayodhya. As a mother, Queen Sunaina was worried about her daughters. She advised her daughters on how to run the family without any inconveniences. The four sisters were happy that they got married in the same family. Even marriage could not separate them. A woman should take care of her family. After her marriage, she never forgot to take care of both the families. King Dhasarath lived with his three wives and four sons in Ayodhya. Kousalya, Kaikeyi and Sumithra cared for one another and there was no

quarrel among them. The four princes grew up together like their mothers. The three mothers took good care of the four princes. Ram was under the care of Mother Kaikeyi. The relationship between mother and son was something special and sacred. The four sons were same to the three mothers.

Manthara, the head maid tried to separate the four brothers. But, she failed in her attempt. So, she tried to separate the four sisters-in-law. She poisoned Mandavi by tempting the desire for crown. Communication is the best key to resolving conflicts. The four sisters usually gathered together and discussed many topics. During the conversation, Manthara's venom on Mandavi was wiped out by the other sisters. Each one knew the value of family and unity. The sisters proved their strong relationship and taught Manthara a great lesson. The love between husband and wife is also well expressed in these novels. When Kaikeyi asked her husband to exile Ram and crown Bharat as king, King Dhasarat silently fulfilled her boons. He had faith in Ram that he will never misunderstand his father. Similarly, Ram understood the situation of his family and obeyed his father's wish. Ram went on exile for fourteen years in the forest.

A relationship between husband and wife must be like fish and water but not like fish and fisherman. Kaikeyi was the favourite queen of King Dhasarat. Kaikeyi acted as a fisherman, who used love as bait and fulfilled her boon. Sita gave up the luxury of a palace to follow her husband. And Lakshman abandoned the comfort of his family to serve his brother Ram and sister-in-law. As a wife, Urmila wanted to accompany him. But, she was asked to stay in the palace to take care of their broken family. So, she remained in the palace. "It is you who binds all the sisters together with your patience and wisdom. Please do it for me now. Look after my broken family: (145). Mother Kousalya wanted to accompany her son. "Be kind, son, take pity on me... How will this old mother live without her son? Take me with you!" (139). But, she was in the palace to look after her old husband.

Queen Sunaina could not bear the pain of her daughter's lonely life. She asked her daughter to come to Mithila. As a dutiful wife, she took care of her husband's family. "As a wife? I did. And I stood by his decision," (183). It was a duty of everyone in the family to point out the mistakes and make them to move in a right path. Here, Bharat blamed his own mother for her evil action. When a mother thinks about her son, she was ready to do anything for him even if the world was against it. She never took her step back. Kaikeyi did everything for her son Bharat. On the other hand, brother Bharat always considered himself as incomplete without his brothers even when he was crowned.

Sumithra was an ideal mother. She gave Bharat all the love as her own son despite Kaikeyi's ill-treatment of her own son. When no one spoke to Kaikeyi, she realized her mistake and the loneliness made her to know the value of family relationship. King Dhasarat's soul left his body because of the separation of his son. This shows the strong father-son relationship. Everyone in the royal family was mourning for King's death and the prince's exile. So, no one took care of the kingdom. Urmila as a true daughter-in-law took care of the family as well as the country. She helped Shatrughan in managing the palace as well as in the state affairs. Urmila is an ideal woman who played her role perfectly in all fields.

The presence of everyone in the family is important for a happy life. So, Kousalya, Bharat and others went to the forest to convince Ram to return to Ayodhya. But, Ram refused to come because he wanted to fulfill his father's wish. "Break my father's promise? Shame and woe on the child who does not fulfill his parent's wishes! I would rather die than commit this sin!" (217). When Bharat decided to do his penance as a hermit in river Sarayu, Urmila questioned him. Her bravery indicated her love for her sister Mandavi. Love played an important role in family relationship. Love is accompanied by true care, sacrifice and happiness. Urmila loved her family and was ready to sacrifice everything for her family's happiness. "O Urmila, will the world ever know of your inner suffering, your divine sacrifice?" (158).

Families need to be united of mutual caring and support; they can be sources of lifelong strength for all individuals. Urmila was the supporter of the broken family. She tried to reunite the family. Urmila gave up all her luxurious life in the palace and exiled herself in the palace. Her sacrificial life symbolizes a strong bond between husband and wife. Urmila was strong enough to change her family better than hell. When Urmila was with her husband, she asked everyone to take meals together, they were overjoyed and shared their experience in the break time. Sometimes, through the discussion, they get many ideas within their family members. It helped to resolve many problems.

Better understanding played a vital role in family relationship. After they understood each other, they felt a little peace and happiness. "All I am asking is for some peace to return in this house" (245). Urmila learnt many things from her father and mother. Urmila become a scholar and disciple of Guru Vasistha. One who respected elders and brought name and fame to her husband's family, it belonged to her father and mother, who brought up with high qualities. She was invited as a scholar in her own father's philosophical conference. King Janak was proud of his daughter. King Janak proudly says that her son-in-law saw intellectual beauty in her. And this made her to become a scholar. "He, my dear, is that man who brought out the best in you. He

fell in love with you because of your mind, because you were different from the usual. Fire recognized fire: the fire didn't want water" (270).

Acceptance and redemption are the two essential parts of happy relationship. Urmila accepted the reality what it was. So, she enjoyed her painful lonely life with her husband's love. But, Mandavi refused to accept her pain. So, her life was little bitter for her. Later, she understood everything from Urmila. Forgiving was not easy task to perform. But, when it took place in family, it leads to sacrifice. Urmila forgave Kaikeyi, who leads her to lonely life. This made Kaikeyi to feel guilty and revealed the truth that if she did not make Ram's exile, it leads to misfortune in the family. Forgiveness made a way to know the truth and to understand a person better.

Honor and sacrifice makes happiness and peace among families. Each one's sacrifice was boundless to express. Everyone sacrificed their valuable relations in order to save their family. By making a few simple changes in the way they looked at the world and dealt with other people, it is possible to create a happier and more stable relationship. Each had to face many obstacles in their life, but they never get depressed. If they get depressed, it may affect the family also. Urmila hid her painful moments and approached her family members with a smile. Her individual change made her family to change their life from sorrow to happiness. From this, one can understand that it was in the hands of individuals to make stable relationships. It was duty of each member in the family to spread happiness in their family.

The temporary pains, fights and separations act as a tool to make a strong family relationship. These are like passing clouds. Urmila's love was not only for her husband but also for her sisters, parents and mothers-in-law. It was the unity among the sisters, brothers, husband and wife that brought reputation to the whole family. Their welfare lies in the welfare of the family and vice versa. One can experience and enjoy one's life through his family relationships. If a person had a family support, his achievements are infinite.

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