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## **A Bird's Eye View of Tragic Characters in Kavita Kane's The Fisher Queen's Dynasty**

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### **Abstract:**

*The Mahabharata is a magnum opus by Maharishi Vyasa. It is an exposition of dharma/law (code of conduct) including codes of a king, warrior, of an individual living times of calamity and of a person seeking to attain moksha.*

*According to Hindu Mythology, fate, rebirth, karma, moksha and dharma are the essential factors for every Hindu. Fate is inescapable and stands as omnipresent. No one has the power to stand against the fate. Lord Brahma the creator who creates the fate of all living beings. Kavita Kane an Indian writer of mythology throws light on the characters*

*of Hindu epic the Mahabharata in the novel The Fisher Queens Dynasty. It is an attempt to view the epic through the lens of Satyawati. The paper also focuses on the tragic characters of the novel. It portrays the sufferings, humiliations and sorrowful days in the life of innocent characters.*

*The present article mainly talks about the tragic characters of the novel they are, Bhishma and Amba. One has met tragic end due to the revenge and the other one is Bhishma who is responsible for his own tragic fate due to the oath of life long celibacy.*



### **Design/Methodology /Approach:**

The paper is prepared by accumulating secondary data from educational websites and written articles. The study shall be carried out with use of research journals, scholarly books, Doctoral thesis and websites. This qualitative research is carried out by studying and interpreting the existing knowledge on the subject using the keywords 'Bhishma', 'fate', 'oath', 'tragic', 'selfish', 'epic', 'mythology' which are accessible in online articles, peer-reviewed journals, publications and other related portals.

### **Findings / Results:**

Bhishma's entire life was spent trying to trace what is his position in his family? He lost everything after taking the terrible oath of celibacy. Bhishma's life shows us how people and society for their self-fulfilled wishes turned into selfish motifs. He stands as an epitome of sacrifice, selflessness, true to relation and responsible and the one who is solely responsible for his own tragic fate.

### **Originality:**

The paper attempts to make a sincere study of tragic characters with the mythical background focuses on the novel *The Fisher Queens's Dynasty*. The story of Bhishma Pitamaha, is pre-eminently great, nevertheless fate and destiny played an unwarned game which facilitates the readers to identify themselves with tragic character similarly the Amba's character also makes the readers to know the sufferings and humiliation of the women in the society which completely turned her to be a tragic character.

Key Words: Bhishma, Fate, Oath, tragic, selfish, epic, Hindu Mythology.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

India is a land named after the great king Bharat. Hence, it is called as Bharatbhoomi, Bharatvarsha and Bharatkhandas as per the records of ancient Hindu texts. It is a land of rich culture and values and has become a model for many countries. The great epics of India the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* continuously spreading the messages of moral and ethical values to human society since the time immemorial. The present paper throws light on the tragic Characters of the epic *Mahabharata*. The writer has tried to portrays the *Mahabharata* through the lens of Satyawati in *The Fisher Queen's Dynasty*. The article aims to picturize the



sufferings and humiliations of tragic characters. The paper juxtaposes the character Bhishma and Amba unveils how these two noble characters become the puppet in the hands of fate.

## 2. OBJECTIVES

This paper highlights the theme of the *Mahabharata* -**The body may perish, but values endure**. The objectives are –

- To explore Bhishma and Amba as a tragic characters.
- To analyze Bhishma's Pratijya: A terrible self-oath of life long celibacy.
- To analyze sacrificial nature of Bhishma, how it acts as real doom in his own life.
- To investigate Amba's revenge due to Bhishma's act of rejection.

## 3. MEYHODOLOGY.

This paper is prepared by using secondary data from educational websites and articles. The study is carried out with the use of Research Journals, books and websites. This research is developed by studying and interpreting the existing knowledge on the subject.

## 4. TRAGIC ELEMENTS:

Life of humans on this earth just like **Froth and Bubble**, the phrase explains that the life is temporary and uncertain and no one has the power to judge what will happen in the very next moment because everything depends on fate. According to Hindu Mythology, "Fate is written by Lord Brahma, the creator of the world/cosmos. Fate or destiny determines who we are, what we achieve, what we suffer and what we feel. Fate is recognized as to be omnipresent and omnipotent."

All the emotions like happiness, sadness, loyalty, love, care, concern, kindness, victory, success, failure, goodness, badness, fortune, misfortune are the major elements which are necessary to every human being. A life of individual on this earth is the fine mixture of these qualities one must accept these qualities which depend on the event or time. Tragedy and comedy are always the two legs of human body. Man being a social animal must adjust himself to the norms of society because society has many faces sometimes it may be tragic face at the same time it might be comic. Man always look the face of tragic as well as comic side of lifestyle.



## 5. LITEARY IMPORTANCE

Literature mirrors the society. Life of human being portrayed through the different characters in the genres of literature. It picturizes the society and social life through writings. The *Mahabharata* and *the Ramayana* are the two great epics of India. Literature, poetry, drama, prose, ballad and epics are the elements /genre of every literature. Tragedy and comedy are the parts of dramatic narrative in literature.

Tragedy is a type of drama /literary work in which the protagonist is brought to ruin one's life or meet the extreme sorrowful situations which happens due to the consequences of a tragic flaw, moral weakness or inability to cope with unfavorable circumstances. greed, over ambition, loyalty or excess of love. Tragic flaw, tragic hero, tragic death, tragic characters are the terms which are mainly considered as the tragic elements. These elements are nothing but having the objects of tragedy, involving death, grief or destruction.

### TRAGIC CHARACTERS:

In literature, a tragic character is a persona with great, noble and ideal traits along with fatal flaw, which ultimately leads to one's downfall. The flaw of the characters could be anything that could be from pride, excessive curiosity or jealousy, over ambition but it will definitely lead the character's destruction. Demise may happen literal i.e. death or metaphorical i.e. loss of property. "The ideal tragic hero.... must be an intermediate kind of person, a man not pre-eminently virtuous and just, whose misfortune, however is brought upon him not by vice or depravity but by some error of judgment." (Islam, Aristotle Tragic hero)

The epic the *Mahabharata* is one of the mammoth literary works of Hindu religion which stands as an epitome of inspiration to the human society. The two great epics the *Mahabharata* and *the Ramayana* always teach us the values and messages to lead an ideal life. The epics focuses on the reality of life as it portrays the good and bad, negative and positive, victory and fall, jealousy and love, friendship and animosity. They also explore the life of great mythical characters and their ideal lifestyle. The epics also portray the sufferings of the divine characters as some ordinary human beings. Ekalavya, Bhishma, Gandhari, Karna, Draupadi, Amba, Sahadeva, Drutharastra, Uttar are the tragic characters that we came across in the epic *Mahabharata*.



### NATURE OF TRAGIC CHARACTER/HERO:

Usually tragic hero has these qualities, they are

- a. Born in nobility.
- b. Exhibit heroic traits.
- c. Leadership qualities.
- d. Responsible for their own fate.
- e. Stand against to the powerful forces.
- f. Face and accept death with honor.
- g. Meet a tragic death at last.
- h. Positive attitude.
- i. Sacrificial nature.
- j. Strong, respective, successful responsible and available nature.

Kavita Kane is a well-known writer of Indian fictional genre. She is born in Mumbai and settled in Pune with her sweet family. Basically, she is a journalist but her interest is more in the field of cinema and theater. She is one of the full time authors of Indian Mythological fiction. Currently she is the author of 8 novels viz: *The Fisher Queen's Dynasty*, *The Ahalya's Awakening*, *The Sita's Sister*, *The Karna's Wife*, *The Sarasvati's Gift*, *Lanka's Princess* and her latest novel *The Tara's Truce* which throw light on female characters from Hindu Mythology.

The writer explains that the writings about Indian feminine mythical characters are silent tales, unheard and unsung. She is giving voice to voiceless characters. As she says,

"These characters are part of the epic narrative but haven't had the space reserved for them as they are minor characters but the moment the grave falls on them, they are seen as distinct individual with a story to tell."

(Kavita Kane, 'Tells Stories of Unsung Women from Mythology')

Kane through her writings brings to limelight characters to the mainstream of society. Her female voice is somehow strong and protestive. The paper investigates the tragic fate of mythical characters from the novel, *The Fisher Queen's Dynasty*. The title of the novel juxtapose that it is about Dynasty of Fisher Queen i.e. Kali, Matsyagandha or Satyavati who became the queen mother of Hastinapur dynasty. It is an attempt to lens the epic the *Mahabharata* from Satyarthi's point of view. Kane articulates about marginalized characters



of Hindu mythology. The present paper focuses on the tragic characters of the novel as they are,

### **Bhishma as a tragic character**

Bhishma or Gangaputra originally named as is Devavrata, one of the eight sons of Goddess Ganga and King Shantanu of Hastinapur. Bhishma an ideal personality and stands as a strong pillar to Hastinapur dynasty. Kavita Kane portrayed Bhishma, who has the great valor, courage, responsible and one who never hurts to anyone but he hurt himself for the sake of happy family.

“Poor boy is doomed to live a cursed life in earth, as your son, he is born pious, wise and endure endless mortal pain and suffering.” (T. F. Q. D pp.08)

The above lines articulate that he belongs to royal bloodline. The blood of divine i. e. Ganga and King clan i. e. Shantanu. Instead of his royalties he suffered and met the tragic end due to the self vow of lifelong celibacy. Bhishma becomes the responsible for his own fate. Devavrata, the real heir to Hastinapur Dynasty. As prince he has all the power to rule his kingdom but his sacrificial nature, turn him to sacrifices his birth right for the sake of his father. Sacrificial nature is one of the characteristics of tragic hero. The nature throws Dev to the life long tragedy because he sacrificed everything due to his father's happiness.

Shantanu, the king of Hastinapur dynasty falls in love with Matsyagandha or Kali or The Fisher girl after all for his physical beauty and fragrances, a gift from Rishi Parashar to Satyawati. The marriage of Shantanu and Kali was disturbed by the conditions of Dasaraj, the chief ton of fisherman and the father of Satyawati. As per the condition of Dasaraj; if Shantanu gets marry to Satyawati their son must be coronate as king not Bhishma though he is the first son of Shantanu. Meanwhile Bhishma also ready to accept the condition for his father's sake, he says,

“Mother would have continued to stay with her husband happily ever after but this was not to be, because of me. Mother left father because of me; she had to return to Heaven to groom me. I cannot bear to see my father's lonely, empty eyes; they neigh me down and guilt legs heavily on my heart now father has found love again.” (T, F, Q, D.pp.88)

Sacrifice due to his paternal love but. that love became the reason for Bhishma's tragedy when he took the oath of celibacy which is widely known as Bhishma Pratijya.



### **Bhishma Pratijya: A Self Desired Oath of Life Long Celibacy**

Devavrata becomes Bhishma after taking the terrible Oath in Indian Mythology. Bhishma Pratijya is unbreakable and terrible vow by Dev, who stay celibate and never marry in order to follow the words and conditions of Dasaraj and the throne of Hastinapur would pass to the progeny of Kali or Matsyagandha.

“I vow to you, Sir. I shall never marry and henceforth, shall dedicate my life to celibacy and unbroken chastity. I swear that I shall never be with a woman nor father to children. May my mother, Ganga, the devas, be the witnesses to my promise to You-I Devavrata the son of Ganga and Shantnu pledge never to marry and father, children, with any woman. I shall remain without a wife and child till my last breath, that is my promise to you”.

(T. F. Q. D. pp, 91)

Bhishma Pratijya is considered as one of the great events in Hindu Mythology after this terrible Oath turned Dev as Bhishma, “Bhishma” means a man who takes the most terrible vow” (T.F. Q. D. pp,91)

After the oath of Bhishma that he has completely lost everything, the tragic days began after the marriage of his father with Satyawati. For his sacrifice and strong decision, he received boon from his father “Icchamruthyu” (T.F.Q.D.pp.102) a self-desired death wish.

Bhishma never completely enjoyed the maternal love due to the conditions of Ganga, similarly the conditions of Dasaraj make him to detach from his paternal love. Some how he lost the love of his parents. Bhishma become a regent after the death of his father, means he govern a kingdom in the minority absence because, Satyawati had two boys Chitrghandha or Chitravirya and Vichitravirya. Bhishma stands as a fatherly figure to these two children. Bhishma a true care taker of these two children first sacrifice his happiness for his father’s sake now for his father’s children’s sake. His responsible as fatherly figure he taught them archery and war fare skills.

“Life is a tale, told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifies nothing”. (Macbeth, acts5, scene –5). The above line throws light on the tragic life of human being. Sometimes life seems a big saga with no proper intentions, similarly Dev’s life also become lifeless.it is simply a story without any intention. The cruel twist of fate totally destroyed and created the storm in the life of Bhishma.



### **Amba, Ambika, Ambalika: Three sisters of Kashi:**

Responsible and heroic traits of Bhishma successfully brought these three sisters in order to wed Vichitravirya but this was the big mistake that Bhishma committed in his life when he couldn't listen the words of these three sisters. That turned the event completely different, which gives the way to the fury and revenge of Amba on Bhishma.

### **Amba Bhishma's Fatal Fate:**

Amba was rejected by Vichitravirya because she was engaged to someone else. Bhishma abducted her without the knowledge about her engagement with Shalva Prince. "Forgive me, Amba. If you can". (T, F.Q.D. pp,248) he muttered because Amba was rejected by Shalva for suspicious about her chastity. Directly or indirectly Bhishma became the reason for everything. He was responsible for her tragic life.

"Forgive me, please, for I your sinner, I cannot go against my pledge, but by doing so I am committing a worse, unpardonable, crime, I can't marry you and I cannot forgive myself". (T, F. Q. D pp, 240)

Bhishma torn between two worlds. He was in a fix that he lost control in his own life. Amba's life was completely ruined due to his heroic power at swayamavara. At the same time, he couldn't have the ability or power to mend her life because of his terrible decision. Hence, she says, "I shall challenge you; I shall be the death of you!" (T, F. Q. D, pp. 252) This apocalyptic event created revenge in the princess and she met Parashuram, a guru of Bhishma and requested him to kill Bhishma and avenge her. Even Parashuram was unable to kill Bhishma because he is an invisible warrior and has the boon of the Icchamruthyu. The nemesis between Amba and Bhishma diverted to the path to the death of two tragic characters in the novel. The first one is Amba and the second one is Bhishma.

### **Shikhandi, a Form of Bhishma's Death:**

Amba reborn as Shikhandi. Bhishma knew that Shikhandi was the rebirth of princess Amba. In the previous birth. Amba tells him that, she would take another life and destroy him before entering herself into the holy fire. Bhishma always respects women but his oath couldn't allow him to give justice to Amba. Hence, he promised her that he wouldn't resist his death in her hands and he would surrender his weapons to her when she comes to kill him. Thus, Bhishma couldn't attack on her in the war of Kurukshetra and accepted the Icchamruthyu that is the end of the tragic hero of the epic *The Mahabharata*.



Bhishma a tragic hero, tolerated everything for the sake of his father's happiness because the only reason he took a terrible oath which completely destroy the life of Devavrata who turned him as Bhishma. Directly or indirectly Satyawati was the main reason for the great war. As if she was not entered in the life of Shantnu there won't be Bhishma and his Pratiya, and the great war of Dharma and Adharma i. e. KURUKSHETRA.

## 2. AMBA AS A TRAGIC CHARACTER:

The writer introduced Amba is one of three princesses of Kashi. Bhishma's heroic power, sudden decision and abduction from the swayamavara made suspect on Amba's chastity by Shalva, with whom she was in love with. At the same time, she was rejected by Vichitravirya for her love on Shalva "This is my duty; the rectification of my error". (T.F. Q. D. pp. 226) Bhishma tried to mend the error of his decision. He sent Amba to the place of prince Shalva but Amba received insults and returned to Hastinapur back with heavy heart due to the rejection and suspect by Shalva prince. Meanwhile a kind of Closeness build between Bhishma and Amba hence, she pleaded him to marry her but Bhishma's oath binds him that he couldn't marry and produce the children for the very reason he also rejected the Amba's proposal. She says, "I don't want to forgive, I want justice!" (T, F, Q, D, pp.248)

Amba's life was completely destroyed by the decision of Bhishma. He was equally responsible for the life of Amba but solution was out of his control.

"For me, justice means revenge! I want to avenge the humiliation and suffering I've undergone all these years. He started it but I shall end it." (T. F. Q. D. pp, 248).

Amba completely turned opposite to Bhishma, even she is ready to kill him. For it she seeks help from all Gods. Even she met his guru Parashuram who couldn't beat Bhishma in the battle because of his Icchamruthy. At finally she challenged Bhishma,

"I want my life back, Bhishma and if no one can help me get it from you. I would rather die! But even in my death, I shall seek my revenge, Bhishma, I shall come back for you again and again!". (T. F. Q. D. pp, 264)

Shikhandi the previous birth of Amba. At last she is succeeded in the last days of Kurukshetra war, as Bhishma's promise to Amba in the previous birth as he says,

"You may wound me with your arrows, I won't fight with you. Even if God has created you as a hero you are still the Amba of yore for me". (A. P. K. pp, 03)

Bhishma completely surrender himself to Shikhandi. The writer portrayed Amba as tragic character because she was nowhere in the game of fate. The innocent life of Amba was



destroyed by the motifs of selfish minds. Revenge, identity, sorrows, rejection turned her life completely tragic one.

## CONCLUSION:

The *Mahabharata* is the saga of everyday life. It portrays the life of man without any distinction. The research aims to explore the social life of all categories and the feelings and emotions of human, morals and ethical values, importance of family and relationships are picturized in the epic Mahabharata with all these values and morals the epic stands as the model to the present generation. Through many characters the writer of epic Maharishi Vyasa unveils the life of individual in the society. He exposes the realities of life on this earth. The paper highlights the tragic characters in the novel *The Fisher Queen's Dynasty* and focuses on how the author gives voice to marginalized characters.

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