



# EXPLORING THE THEME OF MYTH AND FOLK IN GIRISH KARNAD'S *NAGAMANDALA*

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**Abstract:** This article aims to develop theoretical knowledge in Literature Studies to find out the theme of Myth and Folk in Girish Karnad's *Nagamandala* and *Hayavadana*. The paper will also enhance the knowledge of traditional Indian theatre culture and legendary and mythical representations, as well as that of investigative and educational work. Girish Karnad wrote plays for a long time, typically using history and folklore to address contemporary themes. Karnad focuses on social issues and his plays deal with improbable and real issues are located next to the social ones. He has a vibrant energy that scours the past for pertinent myths, stories, and folklore to analyze the present. He made an impact on society, country, and the globe. He tried to represent how to retell Indian mythology in a contemporary setting. Before concentrating on how Girish Karnad reinterprets myths and reinterprets them in his plays to represent contemporary reality, it is crucial to consider his early influences on his development as a dramatist. In his formative years, Karnad was impacted by a wide range of individuals. He was exposed to a sociopolitical context where native and Western cultures were in stark opposition to one another.

**KEYWORDS:** Myth and Folk, Traditional Indian theatre culture, legendary, and mythical representations, Indian mythology.

The best-known Indian dramatist in both Kannada and English, Girish Karnad, has a vibrant energy that scours the past for pertinent myths, stories, and folklore to analyze the present. Karnad's skill is in weaving together snippets of historical and mythological experience to make a compelling case. His exposure to street performances in Karnataka villages as a boy and his knowledge with western theatre in Mumbai had an impact on how he retold Indian mythology in a contemporary setting. Before concentrating on how Girish Karnad reinterprets myths and reinterprets them in his plays to represent contemporary reality, it is crucial to consider his early influences on his development as a dramatist. He has won various honors and prizes for his plays in India. Karnad presided over the Sangeet Natak Academy, a division of the National Academy of Performing Arts in New Delhi, from 1988 to 1993. He currently serves as the Nehru Center's administrator in London.

In his formative years, Karnad was impacted by a wide range of individuals. He was exposed to a sociopolitical context where native and Western cultures were in stark opposition to one another. In the 1950s and 1960s, India saw the emergence of two schools of thought: loyalty to the nation's rich cultural history, new modernist methods, and a legacy of colonial rule. Karnad's situation was compared to that of playwright John Dryden from the 17th century, who had to decide between the traditional practices and the regional custom when writing his plays. The rich lineage of Indian classical play and the dynamic folk culture were rarely embraced by the Indian English dramatists of the previous generation, whose role models were Shakespeare, Ibsen, and Shaw.

Additionally, the Indian English dramatists chose the incorrect mythologies and complex historical past from the plentiful material, which was another grave error.

Myths and legends communicate through motifs and symbols, recurrent patterns of human behaviour, and archetypal human experiences. The myths' representations of archetypal social relationships These relationships could exist between fathers and sons, husbands and wives, or brothers. Second, even when we're not conscious of it, myths can influence us. By purposefully reverting to the rich history and parallel art forms made popular by folk theatre, Karnad sheds light on the enormous treasure trove that Indian dramatists can utilize. Karnad brings together the original and the true, the past and the present. The dreams and peaks of the past find parallels in the problems of the present, which lend fresh connotations and experiences through connection, so advancing the subject. Through the transcendence of space and time, myths provide fleeting insights into the mysteries of life. Myth plays a crucial part in expressing, developing, and codifying beliefs in prehistoric cultures; it supports and protects profound qualities, attests to the efficacy of customs, and provides insightful instructions for man's direction. As a result, myths are a crucial part of human civilization. It is not a random story, but a laborious, active force; it is not a creative or intellectual explanation, but rather a useful aspect of early faith and moral understanding.

A myth is a special kind of story that belongs to a certain genre and has a big impact on society. The main protagonists are frequently supernatural people. The word 'fantasy' is typically used to describe a story that is fantastical. According to Alan Dundes' definition of myths, "Myths are prose narratives that, in the society in which they're told, are considered to be veracious accounts of what happened in the remote history." Myth includes jokes and stories passed down orally in any society. It is a collection of made-up tales involving either people or animals. Superstition and unfounded beliefs are the core components of myth tradition. Girish Karnad is one of the most well-known playwrights in modern English drama. His plays frequently employ mythologies. He emphasizes the existence of people in the ground position in his plays. He worked as an actor, director, and screenplay in Hindi and Kannada movies. In acknowledgment of his enormous contribution to Indian literature, he received the Jnanpith Award, the country's highest academic honor. According to R. K. Dhawan, Girish Karnad is the primary author of Indian theatre today. He has injected a rowdy energy into Indian theatre that is most likely due to his interests in acting and directing. His talents extend past the theatre. He has performed in prominent roles in art films, commercial images, and TV documentaries in Hindi and Kannada. He has also directed point films, images, and TV documentaries in English, Kannada, and Hindi. He has visited several nations in his capacity as an ambassador for Indian art and culture. Modern topics including the status of women in Hindu society, gender norms, patriarchy, coitus, violence, and rapacity are addressed in his plays. His characters highlight the seeming irony that is built into life as we know it. He picks the right words to express occasion and persona.

Girish Karnad's play *Nagamandala* exposes the exploitation of women in Indian culture. Rani and Appanna, a newlywed couple, are the main characters in this pastoral-themed novel. Rani has always been kept outside of society and is portrayed as a good person. Appanna completely damns her life. He is taken in by a doxy and misses her attractiveness as a result. Rani, on the other hand, is a servant who resides in her own home. She complies with all her husband's requests. She adores her dictator husband dearly and is the picture of sincerity. She works up a sweat attempting to win her husband over, but in vain. She provides Kurudava love roots to help her win back her husband's devotion. She commands, "Enter Get to work grinding. Create a wonderful curry. Make a paste in it. If you allow him to have a tablespoon, he will become your slave. Rani inserts myth as a component when she adds Kurudava's love roots to the dish. After her initial attempt fails, she mixes the backup root and notices that the curry has gone blood-red. At the ant hills, she gives the curry to the King Cobra Naga, who licks it and falls in love with Rani. This is the pivotal moment in Rani's life. Naga changes into a person and enters Rani's home through the bathroom drain." This represents the merger of two sexual organs. He enters Appanna's bedroom, which is where Rani is. Naga picks a violent fight with the dog to show his love for Rani. Naga's love fully transforms Rani. According to Indian tradition, a woman is seen as an endowment of the land, and when the land is in trouble, a snake helps her out. Numerous stories about snakes are found in Hindu mythology. These creatures are acknowledged to be able to assume mortal form at will. In our Hindu culture, there are several depictions of the Naga. South Indian households frequently have their own refuge, which is typically a snake-infested wooded area in the theater's corner. At first, Rani is averse to having sex, but Naga convinces her otherwise. Naga gives her a lengthy speech on sexual relations, saying things like, "Frogs guaranteeing in projecting precipitation, turtles singing quietly in the dark, foxes, wrenches, underground insects, deceivers, wenches, drinks without a doubt the goose!" The womanly starts to smell moist like the ground. Additionally, the Lord Cobra starts searching for his Sovereign after being overcome by her odour. The creature calls out to his companion. It is spread throughout the entire world. He then informs her that coitus is normal and pleasurable and is not immoral. Rani yields to Naga and develops an intense desire for him. She starts to feel very secure within the Naga organization. Appanna accuses her of infidelity because she is carrying Naga's child. Her husband and every resident of the area force her to make a pledge while clutching a hot iron bar to defend herself. Naga appears to be her savior, moves up her shoulder, and spreads its hood over her head like a marquee.

When Rani is shown to be trustworthy, the people start to worship her as a deity, leaving Appanna with no choice but to study the situation carefully. According to Hindu custom, the husband of an adulteress is a cursed man. These conservative traditions have the effect of making women always in charge of their life. However, Appanna is also betraying his relationship with his wife by hanging around with a doxy, but he doesn't see anything wrong with that. adultery is stigmatized in Indian culture, and Karnad is the only author to have portrayed extramarital lady adultery with respect. Whatever the reason, women always play a role in malevolence. No guy is without flaws. The entire village and Appanna are after Rani, but only Naga saves her. A woman who appears out of nowhere and is originally seen negatively becomes revered by the people. She exhibits her virginity with the help of her nut Naga. The uncaring spouse of Appanna is left feeling helpless and inquires, "What shall I do? Is everyone on the planet against me? Is my interference so noteworthy that nature should mock me? She may have any phenomenon call her a goddess. Whatever the case, I am aware." As a result, the socio-artistic immoralities presented in *Nagamandala* are interwoven with legendary motifs. In the play, a

woman is shown to be obedient to a man's wishes in a traditional Indian society. Rani, on the other hand, has been given freedom by the cobra, allowing her to communicate her thoughts and feelings through movement, emotion, spirituality, and thought.

In the article entitled "Relevance of Myths in Contemporary Times: A Critical Study," the author describes: "The same kinds of tales and even the exact same tale can be found in myths from across the world. The similar explanation, consolation, and meaning-giving purposes are served by myths from all cultures, whether they be Indian, Chinese, European, African, or Native American."

At last, I would like to say that Girish Karnad is one of the most well-known playwrights in modern English drama. His plays frequently employ mythologies. He emphasizes the existence of people in the ground position in his plays. He deals with the modern topics including the status of women in Hindu society, gender norms, patriarchy, coitus, violence, and rapacity, myth and folk are addressed in his plays. His characters highlight the seeming irony that is built into life as we know it. He picks the right words to express occasion and persona. The play Nagamandala exposes the exploitation of women in Indian culture. Monitoring the fantasy and oral practices is made easier with writing and recording. Without this type of literature, almost all oral and traditional traditions would have been lost. The transmission and preservation of myths and oral traditions were most greatly influenced by Indian literature. India, the actual ancestors of this area, was once the pinnacle of all folk art. One example is Sama Veda, which is arguably the most enduring kind of folk music to date. To be true, if one considers Sama Veda to be rock society music, it is also the best and oldest music the world has ever witnessed. Numerous stories have been written down by scholars, saints, and authors to preserve oral traditions and myths, such as the Indian epics of the Ramayana and Mahabharata, the Buddhist Jataka tales, the Pancha Tantras, and Hitopadesha, the mediaeval Katha Saritsagarain, and the Jeremiah songs of the Bauls of Bengal.

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