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**Three Heroines Rani, Padmini and Vishakha :  
The Feminist Perspectives of Girish Karnad**



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**Abstract :**

Girish Karnad presents the characters Rani, Padmini and Vishakha in the plays Naga-Mandala, Hayavadana and The Fire and The Rain respectively. He retells myth, history and folk tales exposing human quest for perfection and the conflict of passions.

Karnad presents Rani as an epitome of an ideal Indian woman in Naga-Mandala. Appana, her husband often turns a deaf ear to her needs and freedom in this play.

Padmini in the play Hayavadana needs Kapila, a dark and strong man. She gets strongly attracted towards him from the beginning. She bemoans that her husband cannot satisfy her body's need after marriage.

The playwright exposes a few basic truths using myths and folk-tales. One of the existential awareness is that life is a product of tension of opposites. Another truth is that woman having a creative principle should not be dominated over. Most importantly, intellect cannot fructify by starving instinct. Rani, Padmini represent instinctual life in the play.

The Fire and the Rain dramatizes the feminist notes through the torture of Vishakha, the wife of the Chief Priest, Paravasu and daughter-in-law of Raibhya. The dramatist represents an elitist class of Brahminic society in the play.

The characters like Rani, Padmini and Vishakha depicted in the plays demand freedom and dignity of a woman in a male-dominated society. His plays based on oral tales, myths and history are relevant to the contemporary times which are quite expressive of Indian ethos and human psyche.

**Keywords :** Rani, Padmini, Vishakha, folk tale, myth