

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-53374

Date: 18-08-2025

Title: The Element of Guilt and Moral Responsibility in Madhavi Mahadevan's 'The Kaunteyas'

Recommendation:

Accept as it isYES.....

Accept after minor revision.....

Accept after major revision

Do not accept (*Reasons below*)

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality		✓		
Techn. Quality			✓	
Clarity		✓		
Significance			✓	

Reviewer Name: Syed Mohammed

Reviewer's Comment for Publication.

Abstract and Scope:

The abstract successfully establishes the rationale for the study by contrasting traditional epic narratives, which emphasize heroic exploits and male-centric perspectives, with contemporary reinterpretations that foreground women's voices. It situates Madhavi Mahadevan's *The Kaunteyas* within this trend, focusing on Kunti as the central figure through whom themes of guilt and moral responsibility are explored. The emphasis on emotional and personal elements overlooked in Vyasa's original Mahabharata provides a clear framework for the paper's critical approach.

Introduction and Contextualization:

The introductory section situates Madhavi Mahadevan as a versatile writer, highlighting her contribution to Indian English literature through fiction, translation, and children's writing. The significance of *The Kaunteyas* (2016) is underscored as a contemporary retelling that re-centers

International Journal of Advanced Research

Publisher's Name: Jana Publication and Research LLP

www.journalijar.com

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Kunti's experiences, struggles, and agency. The quotation from Mahadevan's prologue, "Women's stories are written in water," serves as a poignant entry point into the exploration of female perspectives historically marginalized in epic traditions.

Thematic Exploration:

The central focus on guilt and moral responsibility as literary motifs is crucial to understanding Kunti's character arc in *The Kaunteyas*. These elements provide a lens through which the text examines her choices, the burden of secrecy, and her role in shaping the destinies of her sons and the larger epic narrative. The analysis highlights how Mahadevan's retelling amplifies the inner conflicts of Kunti and other characters, framing them within the larger ethical and emotional dimensions of the Mahabharata.

Contribution to Literary Discourse:

The work aligns with broader feminist literary criticism by engaging with subaltern perspectives in epic retellings. It emphasizes how contemporary Indian English writers reinterpret canonical texts to make space for women's voices, offering an alternative reading that challenges traditional patriarchal representations. By foregrounding Kunti, the novel and the paper contribute to the ongoing discourse on gender, power, and morality in mythological narratives.

Overall Assessment:

The paper provides a clear, focused, and thematically rich study of Madhavi Mahadevan's *The Kaunteyas*, emphasizing how guilt and moral responsibility shape the narrative and character portrayal. It situates the novel within the broader framework of feminist retellings of the Mahabharata and underscores its significance in highlighting women's perspectives in epic traditions. The combination of literary analysis and thematic exploration makes it a valuable contribution to studies in contemporary Indian English literature and mythological retellings.
