



# **VOICE OF SITA IN *SITA: WARRIOR OF MITHILA***

**ARATHY A NAIR**

**PG SCHOLAR**

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**

**AMRITA SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES, KOCHI**

**AMRITA VISHWAVIDYAPEETHAM, INDIA**

**KAVYA PURUSHOTHAMAN**

**ASSISTANT PROFESSOR**

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**

**AMRITA SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES, KOCHI**

**AMRITA VISHWAVIDYAPEETHAM, INDIA**

## **ABSTRACT**

Indian myths are largely patriarchal, with women occupying minor roles, while the epic center is more concerned with their behaviour. Modern legendary tales paint a distinct picture of these epics' female characters. The purpose of this thesis is to look at Amish Tripathi's novel *Sita: Warrior of Mithila's* to examine how Amish's version of Sita differs from the customary depiction.

**KEYWORDS:** Myth, Mythology, Warrior, Re-telling, Ramayana

## **INTRODUCTION**

Edith Hamilton once said, "Myths are early science, the result of men's first trying to explain what they saw around them". Myths are stories that are passed down orally from generation to generation and then retold from memory. It was afterwards written down in a book for future reference. People are constantly drawn to a well-told story because it helps them to escape from their daily stresses. These tales revealed a previously

unknown and unexplored treasure trove of life lessons and morals. The stories' vivid imagery appeals to young imaginations as well.

As evidenced by his books, Swiss psychologist Carl Jung was affected by myths. When man is on the way to realisation, he finds myth to be extremely useful. Myth, he claims, emerges from the unconscious as a source of inspiration. In most mythical stories, the hero fights to accomplish his goal. He is brave enough to risk everything in order to achieve his goal. As a result, myth plays an important part in therapy.

Myth, in particular, deals with history as a manner of looking back in time. The author gathers historical concepts and creates a work that causes the reader to reflect on the past. Myths have an impact on our lives because they are shaped in the same way that we are. Myths are more than just stories; they contain aspects of human truth. They also include a religious component, which gives religious or social themes that represent the society and culture of a particular location.

Individuals may easily identify with their own limitations, which is a major characteristic of mythology. Legendary tales emphasised the need of knowledge by highlighting the consequences of our actions. Myths are still alive and well now because the stories are still relevant in modern circumstances and connect to events that occurred during their time period.

Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957), which linked the typological interpretation of the Bible with the notion of imagination common in William Blake's writings, created the archetypal method known as Myth Criticism. Frye carried on the formalist emphasis of New Critique and insisted on criticism as a scientific, objective, and rigorous profession. The book shows how literary history is a self-contained cycle in which basic symbolic myths (like the deluge and the trickster) recur. Myth critique reintroduced spiritual substance to an alienated, divided society controlled by scientism, empiricism, and technology by using the anthropological and psychological basis of myths, rituals, and folktales.. Myth critique regarded myth-making (and its connotations with magic, imagination, dreams, and so on) as an essential element of human cognition, and myth as civilizations' collective effort to offer an "attends" that grows from a mythic foundation. These limitations were repeated by other contemporaneous ideologies such as Structuralism and the Jungian concept of the "collective unconscious." Transcendental genres including romance (summer), tragedies (fall), irony/satire (winter), and comic (winter) are being used in literature, according to Frye (spring). There are four of them. Summer denotes the completion of the year's seasons, much like romance and marriage denote the end of one's life. Comedy is about achieving one's dreams and desires, thus it's

ideal for spring, whereas satire's disillusioned ridicule is suitable for the frost of winter. As a result, archetypal criticism established a relationship between "universal" psychological feelings and "universal" literary symbols.

## SYNOPSIS

Sita's narrative begins when Janak, the king of Mithila, and his wife discover a female child thrown in a field. They guarded her against a pack of wolves. This girl is adopted and cared for by the monarch and his wife. Sunaina, her mother, was always willing to assist her. She was taken to Rishi Shevthaketu's ashram for her studies when she was fourteen years old. There, she had numerous possibilities to expand her knowledge in a variety of areas as well as martial arts. She befriended Radhika in the ashram and engaged with Hanuman, Radhika's cousin, through Radhika.

The chief of the Malayaputhra tribe, Maharishi Vishwamitra, pays a visit to Shvetaketu's ashram one day. He meets Sita there and is amazed by her abilities. As a result, he chose her to be the next Vishnu to serve the kingdom and instructed her to keep it a secret. Sita also befriends Jatayu. When Sita's mother is unwell, she returns to Mithila. She died afterwards, and Sita was given the task of ruling the land. As a result, she became Mithila's Prime Minister. Simultaneously, she resumed her preparations to become Vishnu. During this time, she learned about Ram, the Prince of Ayodhya, who was chosen by Rishi Vashishta to be the next Vishnu. As a result, she devises a plan to marry Ram through Swayamvar. Sita is irritated by Ravan and Kumbhakarn's presence in the Swayamvar. She called Ram's name first, with Viswamitra's help. Ram is victorious as a result of her efforts, and their Swayamvar takes place. Ravan and his army invade Mithila after the Swayamvar. However, the Lankan army is beaten, and Ravan is able to flee. After breaching Lord Rudra's decree, Ram resolves to go into exile for fourteen years. He is accompanied by Sita and Lakshman. When Ram and Lakshman were out hunting, Ravan and his army attacked their camp. Sita arrived to assist the injured Jatayu. However, she loses the fight and is kidnapped and carried away unconscious. She tries to attack Ravan when she regains consciousness. However, she is stopped by a woman, whom she recognises as her friend Samichi. He is accompanied by Sita and Lakshman. When Ram and Lakshman were out hunting, Ravan and his army attacked their camp. Sita arrived to assist the injured Jatayu. However, she loses the fight and is kidnapped and carried away unconscious. She tries to attack Ravan when she regains consciousness. However, she is stopped by a woman, whom she recognises as her friend Samichi.

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- To reread the epic tale of Ramayana
- To expose the nuances which laid base for the retellings.
- To analyse how the story is retold in Amish's novel.
- To differentiate Amish's Sita from the customary depiction.
- To identify the re-presentation of myths in the work.

## HYPOTHESIS

This paper intends to present Amish Tripathi's novel as a re-presentation or re-telling of the general plot of Ramayana. It analyses how Sita is differentiated as a powerful, voiced warrior, as opposed to the customary depiction.

## ANALYSIS AND MAJOR FINDINGS

Ramayana has a multicultural and multilingual background. There are many Ramayanas in innumerable numbers across different languages, different regions and different cultures. Though there are slight differences in plot, most of them often portray Sita as the silent pillar of strength. The characterisation of Sita is different from the customary depiction. In this work, Amish upholds the role of Sita in the age-old epic, from a mere subject of destiny, to the master who controls events in the story. He has used the narrative technique of hyperlink story to layer the plot and thereby increase the depth and gravity of the novel.

Traditional Ramayana is told from the perspective of Ram. Ram is the hero and the whole story circles around him. Other characters, including Sita are insignificant and irrelevant. Sita is reduced to the wife of Ram. She lacks an identity of her own. The Sita represented in Ramayana is very much marginalised and suppressed by others. She was praised for her sacrifices, but no one dare to raise their voice against injustice towards women. Different from the traditional Sita, Amish's Sita has many distinctive attributes.

The novel *Sita: Warrior of Mithila* Introduces a lady warrior to the readers. Amish's Sita is more beautiful, strong, clever than the customary depiction. She is not a subject of oppression. The plot of Lady Vishnu in the novel centres around a daughter discovered by matriarch Sunaina. She is in charge of rescuing the

country. Sita was the Lady Vishnu who married Ram and made him her companion in her great cause. She beats the Lankan forces in Mithila alongside Ram. She is the saviour, the ruler, and a fantastic administrator.

From her childhood itself Sita was aggressive towards the things which she does not like. She does not have any hesitation to state her disagreement. The queen of Mithila Sunaina was her mentor and she always tries to make her daughter empowered and independent. She was found in a furrow under the care and affection of a vulture which rescued her from a group of wolves. Her mother tells her the way they got Sita, because she wanted Sita to know that nobility came in many a form and face. This is the reason that Sita felt a special connection to Jatayu from the very first moment she saw him. Sita was very curious to know things. From her childhood itself she asks permission from her mother to go to the slums. But She doesn't allow her. At the age of eight she decides to visit the slums without the permission of her mother. She disguised as a maid's child, visits the slums which shows her courage. She does not make any class differences in making friends. Her best friend in Mithila is Samichi, who belongs to the slums and helps the slumdwellers. They share a special bond.

Sita is interested in adventures. When her uncle Kushadhvaj gifts her an Arabian horse she becomes very curious to ride the horse. She is very straight forward and instantly reacts to the events that she does not like. It was the same thing happens when her uncle tries to make Mithila a part of Sankshya. He forged similar seal to claim his rights. But Sita does not like his action, She immediately breaks the seal and it causes a conflict between them. Later she was sent to Shvetaketu's gurukul. There she learns the lessons in the core subjects of Philosophy, Mathematics, Science and Sanskrit. She also takes lessons in other specialised subjects like Geography, History, Economics and Royal Administration. Tripathi mentions Sunaina also as a powerful woman. Her father Janak who gave importance philosophy and non- violence, but Sunaina was exactly opposite to his idea and she believes in being practical. She always tries to motivate Sita when she becomes down "running away is never the solution. Confront your problems. Manage them. That is the way of the warrior"(Tripathi,99). Upon the interest of Sunaina, Sita studied warfare and martial arts.

Sita had impressed everyone in the gurukul including her guru with her intelligence and sharpness. Her kind and spirited nature is quite impressive. She reacts quite aggressively when someone speaks ill about her father and his rules. Such incidents happens in the gurukul itself. So her guru had arranged extra classes on subjects of non- violence and impulse control. In gurukul she Sita befriended Radhika and through her she befriended Hanuman, who is a Naga member and Radhika's cousin.

Rishi Vishwamitra also got impressed by the abilities of Sita ,when he visited Shvetaketu's astram. Vishwamitra is the head of the Malayaputhra tribe and he has responsibility of selecting next Vishnu. Vishnu is the name given to persons who are thought to be propagators of goodness and show others a new way of life. He keenly observed her actions and identified the spark within her. As Vishwamitra observes Sita ,“ tall for a thirteen - year old , she was already beginning to build muscle. Her straight, jet-black hair was braided and rolled into a practical bun. She flicked a spear up with her foot, catching it exactly in her hand. She caught the spear exactly at the balance point on the shaft” (Tripathi,51). Vishwamitra chose Sita as the next Vishnu after being convinced by her capabilities. The sudden illness and death of her mother Sunaina shook her off but could not refrain her from fulfilling her duties and responsibilities. She became the Prime Minister of Mithila after her mother's demise and she also looked after her younger sister . She brought changes in her kingdom with the help of Samichi, the head of Police force in Mithila. Thus Mithila returns to a stable position, like in previous days. Amidst these responsibilities she continued her preparations for becoming the next Vishnu which shows her determination. She travelled to a lot of places including Agasthyakoodam, where her presence is treated as divine and which reinstills her sense of responsibility of being a Vishnu.

When she gets to know about Ram, the prince of Ayodhya , she finds that he is chosen by Vashishtha, the head of Vayuputhra tribe, as the next Vishnu. So she plans a marriage alliance with Ram and immediately calls for a Swayamvar with the help of Vishwamitra. According to their plans Vishwamitra bring Ram and his brother Lakshman to Mithila. They meet in private and shares their idea . It was Sita's plan and she likes to share her vishnuhood with him. Ram marries Sita and it agitates Ravan. Sita and Ram fights together when Ravan attacks Mithila the very next day. She was in the front along with Ram to defeat Ravan and his troop. Ram used Asurastra against the Lankans after he is moved by the emotional words of Vishwamitra. Sita is enraged at Vishwamitra for pushing Ram to make such an unwise decision. It shows the courage of Sita to question an action which is not right.

Sita's martial arts talent is highlighted in several scenes. When Lankans attack their camp, she defends them with her unclear vision and keen sense of sounds.”There were great archers who could shoot arrows by relying on sounds. But very few could throw knives at the source of a sound. Sita was one of those very few”(Tripathi, 4) . Perhaps the most essential or unique aspect of the work is that Sita's physical attractiveness is never overstated, and in fact is never acknowledged at all, save for a few paragraphs. Often

characters or protagonists in mythological tales are presented in such a way that, their attractiveness is so concentrated and eulogised and there are no flaws to be detected. However, Amish presents Sita as realistically as possible. Ram fallen for faltered beauty of Sita. When he saw for first time, he got impressed by her scarred beauty. When Ram decides to go for exile she accompanies him because she thinks that she also shares the equal responsibility. Sita approaches Jatayu for their security and she also arranges somaras which helps in anti-aging. Ram's brothers are impressed by the capabilities of Sita." Ram wanted to marry a woman in front of whom he would be compelled to bow his head in admiration "(Tripathi, 210). Ram's brothers thought that his brother would not get a women similar with his qualities . But Sita proved that their beliefs were wrong.

Life in forest was difficult for everyone, but Sita enjoyed it because she counted their exile as a learning experience. She got accustomed with the situations in the forest very fast. When their camp was attacked by Ravan in the absence of Ram and Lakshman, Sita tried her best to protect her men and to hit back. But she failed at one point and got abducted by Ravan. She was not an ordinary woman, her abilities, her courage, her life motives distinguishes her from every other woman in the society. They are not meant to be victims but they have to raise themselves to the position of a warrior. Then only she receives the respect and recognition she deserves.

## CONCLUSION

In current Indian society, women's status is still debatable. Even though there have been some advancements, our culture is still controlled by men. Fiction writers frequently turn to mythology and histories for solutions to the problems that our society confronts today. Our mythologies are essentially patriarchal. All of the stories have female characters who play small roles..Modern re-tellings of patriarchal legends tend to take a different approach, allowing us to hear the voices of the unheard. *Sita: Warrior of Mithila* is a one-of-a-kind novel. It portrays Lady Sita in an entirely different light. Sita's portrayal by the Amish as a skillful warrior, unbiased ruler, exemplary wife, and above all as a lady who would inspire others leads us to believe she is a Vishnu. Sita is a modern woman because of her unorthodox portrayal as a self-sufficient, powerful, and sensible lady. Thus, Amish's *Sita: Warrior of Mithila* might be considered a trip into Indian womanhood consciousness. Sita is transformed into a symbol of progress and spiritual awakening for women. To get

here, Sita had to pass through several tight alleys and lanes. In each progressive interpretation of the Ramayana or critical texts produced on the Ramayana, she has demonstrated the incremental evolution. However, these two novels are currently seen as two extremes: inception and destination. The questions are posed by the Valmiki Ramayana, and the solution is offered by Amish's Sita: Mithila's Warrior. The researcher did his best to describe her trip through these two poles by delving into the layers that contain her history, customs, myths, and anecdotes.

## REFERENCES

1. Sharma, Agni. *Ramayana*. Dreamland Publications, 2012.
2. Tripathi, Amish. *Sita: Warrior of Mithila*. Westland Publishers, May 2017.
3. Tripathi, Amish. *The Immortals of Meluha*. Westland Publications, 2010.
4. Bhaskarananda, Swami. *The Essentials of Hinduism*. Viveka Press, 2011.
5. Sharma, Sunita. "Myth Modernity And Philosophy In Amish Tripathi's Novels." *Hdl.Handle.Net*, 2022, <https://hdl.handle.net/10603/197989>.
6. G., Sivaranjini. "The Portrayal of Sita by Kambar and Amish Tripathi: A Comparative Study." *An International Multidisciplinary Journal*, vol.5, no.3, July 2019.
7. Bhadauria, Manishkumar. "From a Victim to a Warrior: Journey of Sita in Amish Tripathi's Sita: Warrior of Mithila." *A Global Journal of Social Sciences*, vol.3, no.2, June 2020, pp.18-25.
8. Lavanya, S. Sita-" The Born Vishnu". in Amish Tripathi's Sita: Warrior of Mithila. *Research Journal of English Language and Literature*, Vol.5, no.4, December 2017, pp.41-55.