

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT SOCIOLOGY & HUMANITIES



ISSN 2277 – 9809 (online)

ISSN 2348 - 9359 (Print)

An Internationally Indexed Peer Reviewed & Refereed Journal

www.IRJMSH.com
www.isarasolutions.com

Published by iSaRa Solutions

BEYOND SITA: FEMININE STRENGTH AND SUBVERSION IN AMISH TRIPATHI'S *SITA: WARRIOR OF MITHILA*

Dr. Anchal Jain

Associate Professor, Department of English
Digamber Jain College, Baraut

Dr. Deepti Jain

Assistant professor
Dept. Of Physics,
Shri K. K. Jain College, Khatauli

ABSTRACT

Amish Tripathi is a celebrated author, known for his mythological retellings. His retellings have gained a lot of attention, especially for their feminist aspects. The following research paper concerns itself with the study of feminist elements of Amish Tripathi's *Sita: Warrior of Mithila*. This novel is also a retelling of the Ramayana that presents a more nuanced picture of Sita. She is portrayed as more than just Rama's wife. Amish Tripathi reimagines her as a warrior, leader, and strategist, as he departs from the traditional ideas that portray Sita as passive, obedient, and self-sacrificing. Amish Tripathi's Sita is a complex character who is not afraid to challenge patriarchal expectations. She is a symbol of intellect and physical strength. Amish Tripathi portrays Sita as an able leader and princess. He does not confine her to patriarchal restraints that dictate her behavior and identity. This research paper examines how the novel challenges the traditional gender roles found in mythological epics like Ramayana. *Sita: Warrior of Mithila* is not just a popular narrative but it also serves as a tool for cultural intervention by reclaiming Sita's identity from patriarchal traditions. He reimagines Sita in the contemporary context. This research paper presents an analysis of Amish Tripathi's novel with a focus on its feminist dimensions.

Keywords: Feminist, mythological, contemporary, political, strength, retelling, patriarchal.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, Indian readers have become increasingly aware of their mythological heritage, and this has led to a rise in fiction revolving around mythological retellings. These works often present a reinterpretation of epic figures and mythological stories through a contemporary lens. It would not be wrong to say that among such writers who work on fiction relating to Indian mythology, Amish Tripathi is one of the most prominent voices. He started his career as a writer in 2010 when his first novel, *The Immortals of Meluha*, was published. In the following years, he covered major Indian mythological characters in his works, namely the Shiva Trilogy and the Ram Chandra

series. Both these series of books offer a revisionist approach. Owing to his unique writing style and spectacular reinterpretation, Amish Tripathi has become a successful Indian writer.

In the second book of the Ram Chandra series, *Sita: Warrior of Mithila*, we see Amish Tripathi diverging from the traditional portrayal of Sita. In canonical texts like Valmiki's Ramayana and Tulsidasa's Ramcharitmanas, we see that Sita is often portrayed as a passive character with a calm demeanor. She is often portrayed as an ideal wife who can be seen supporting her husband through thick and thin. However, Amish Tripathi focuses on Sita as an independent and individual being. He redefines her existence without connecting it to Rama. For Tripathi, Sita is strong, politically astute, and morally autonomous. She not only supports her husband in the protection of dharma, but she herself takes an active part in the protection of dharma.

What Amish Tripathi does through his writing is commendable. He not only gives his readers an alternate version of the mythological stories and epics, but he also challenges the patriarchal side of these narratives. He reclaims female agency. He has done the same in *Sita: Warrior of Mithila*. In his writing, he goes beyond the role of Sita as a dutiful wife and the self-sacrificing queen. While he acknowledges these values, he does not end his narrative there. He recognizes Sita's character as much more complex and diverse. For him, Sita is a warrior and a scholar. In all his writings, he reimagines cultural myths through the lens of gender justice.

RETELLING OF THE EPIC

The writings of Amish Tripathi are significantly different from the canonical version. The same can be seen in *Sita: Warrior of Mithila* as well. In the canonical versions of the Ramayana, we find Sita as the epitome of feminine virtue. She is obedient, chaste, self-sacrificing, and devoted. She is portrayed as the ideal wife who stands by her husband. She is idealised as Pativrata, or the devoted wife. She is often treated as the moral standard for womanhood. In our society, we often view Sita as the perfect wife and woman, who stayed devoted and true to her husband. She is the epitome of sacrifice as she is portrayed as the queen who sacrificed all the luxuries of life to accompany her husband on an exile. Her strength in these narratives is often moral and emotional. It is not expressed through some loud acts. Instead, it is expressed through endurance and silence.

In Valmiki's Ramayana, Sita is portrayed as a resilient woman. She accompanies her husband into exile without any hesitation and refuses to be rescued from Ravana by anyone except her husband. However, her agency remains constrained. The epic has a very patriarchal undertone, and this prevents her from coming across as a strong character. Her autonomy is further limited through incidents like the Agni Pariksha, where she is forced to prove her chastity by stepping into the fire. Even after proving her innocence, she is eventually banished. This represents how she is not strong or powerful. She is shown as subject to societal norms that prevail over justice. Ayushi Gupta

writes in her research paper titled *“Warrior, Leader, Icon: Representation of Sita in Amish Tripathi's 'Sita: Warrior of Mithila'”*:

“In the Valmiki Ramayana, Sita is depicted as an epitome of goodness, purity, and sacrifice. That ideal Pati-vrata dharma she showed with unconditional faith and patience. Her strength lay in withstanding a multidimensional test of abduction by Ravana and subsequent ordeals. Valmiki's Sita stands for moral integrity and resilience, inner strength, and devoted steadfastness. As Valmiki writes, "नाहंकामान्नभयान्नलोभात्, नानृतेनापिधर्मं पिहाय | ितयेयत्तुमेतन्निचा, समेधमतस्त्ां अनुव्रतस्वा ||" (Valmiki Ramayana, Ayodhya Kanda, Sarga 30, Sloka 5) This line reflects Sita's unwavering moral integrity, resilience, and steadfast devotion, embodying her strength and commitment to righteousness in the epic narrative of Ramayana”

Something similar happens in Tulsidasa's Ramcharitmanas. The tone of Ramcharitmanas is devotional and here, Sita is portrayed as a figure of sacrifice and devotion. While it is true that her purity is focused upon, her individuality is lost somewhere. She is treated as a mere extension of her husband's divinity. She is highly respected and revered but her character is not celebrated individually. Her spiritual purity is emphasized but her individuality is reduced. Such traditional portrayals have shaped the understanding of womanhood in Indian society where endurance, patience, and self-sacrifice are given more importance over assertiveness and leadership.

Because of the profound impact that they have, rewriting epics like Ramayana have a number of cultural and social implications. Contemporary authors often use rewriting epics as a way to challenge gender norms that have been deeply entrenched in our society. It helps them in reclaiming marginalized voices and highlighting the other side of the story. This is what Amish Tripathi has also done. In *Sita: Warrior of Mithila*, Tripathi presents Sita as the symbol of female agency, leadership, and resistance. He offers us a different version of the epic, one that is told from Sita's perspective. In this version of mythology, women are not just additional characters, they occupy the central stage. They are not idealized for suffering, but they are celebrated for their strength and bravery. Amish Tripathi's work is more than just a novel; it is a cultural artifact. It breaks gender norms and challenges the sanctity of singular narratives.

SITA AS A WARRIOR AND LEADER IN TRIPATHI'S WORK

In traditional narratives and portrayals, it is not surprising to find Sita being depicted as the ideal woman who is obedient, devoted, and morally pure. She is described through and known for her relationship with her husband, Rama. She does not have a strong independent existence or identity. Traditionally, she is rarely seen engaging in political or physical action in a direct manner. Her power is largely internal and spiritual. Amish Tripathi challenges this archetype by reimagining

Sita. For him, she is not a symbol or submissive virtue. He views her as a dynamic figure. He glorifies her physical strength and intellectual abilities. Dr. Asish Kumar Pandey and Ms. Manju Bharadwaj write in their research paper titled; *“An Analysis of Mythical Elements in Amish Tripathi’s Sita: Warrior of Mithila”*:

“Tripathi's portrayal of Sita highlights her as a strong fighter, in contrast to the conventional representation that focuses mostly on her as a damsel in distress. She is portrayed as being able to lead armies into war, proficient in combat, and talented with an arrow. This feature gives Sita a fresh perspective and defies stereotypes and traditional gender norms.”

Amish Tripathi has shown that Sita is raised in a place which is progressive. He portrays Mithila as a progressive city. As a princess, Sita has trained in martial arts, strategy, and governance from a very young age. She is also very good at these things. She does not hesitate in defending herself. She leads others and makes critical decisions. She is not fragile or passive as opposed to the long-standing notion of femininity. Amish Tripathi has painted Sita as a brave and strong warrior, the same adjectives which are traditionally used to describe a prince. Sita is not just physically strong, but she is also very intelligent. She is a part of many philosophical debates. She is someone who understands the complexity of law and justice. She is the prime minister of Mithila who is responsible for taking major political actions. She is not just the nominal head. She implements policy, negotiates alliances, and leads her people with great skill. Her role in her kingdom is not passive at all. By adding these elements to Sita’s character, Tripathi has redefined feminine strength. He has portrayed strength to mean courage, intellect, and strategic acumen, instead of just endurance or sacrifice. The Sita that he has created does not wait to be rescued by someone; she does it for herself. She creates her own path and writes her own destiny. By doing so, Amish Tripathi has redefined gender roles in mythological creations.

Amish Tripathi has focused on the complex identity of Sita. She represented a lot of different things at the same time. All of her identities are a challenge to the representation of women in traditional epics in many ways. Sita is represented as a princess, a warrior, and a strategist. She is a physically strong woman. She is powerful and fearless. She does not hesitate to engage in combat. She speaks her heart and is ready to fight for justice. By this representation, Amish Tripathi has challenged the concept of feminine dharma. He does not believe that women are passive protectors of dharma, nor does he believe that protection and confrontation are exclusively masculine traits. For him, Sita does everything that traditionally only men have done.

“She had mastered the skills of a warrior, excelled in combat training and strategic planning.”

(Sita: Warrior of Mithila, 112)

Sita is also portrayed as a strategist. She is politically astute. She makes calculated decisions as the leader of her people. This reflects her foresight and ethical reasoning. She knows how to balance compassion with pragmatism. She is a very capable leader, and the same is evident from her conduct. She proves that governance and leadership need not be gendered and that women are as capable as men. Her complex character is a deviation from the stereotypical binary of the docile wife or the vengeful goddess. Amish Tripathi also represents Sita as a princess. She is royal as well as relatable. She embraces her responsibilities with great skill and views them as an opportunity to reform her kingdom and enact meaningful change. Despite being a princess and having royal status, she is not immune to struggle. Her status becomes a platform for her to advocate for justice and inclusivity. All these different roles and identities allow Sita to be viewed as a modern heroine. They shift the epic archetype of the feminine figure from passive sufferer to powerful agent. Sita is not just Rama's wife or counterpart. Tripathi portrays her as his equal who is capable of upholding dharma in her own way and right. By doing so, Tripathi offers a feminist reinterpretation of the epic that resonates with contemporary discourses.

RESISTANCE TO GENDER ROLES

Amish Tripathi has used his work, *Sita: Warrior of Mithila*, to redefine and resist the traditional gender roles that have been a part of ancient Hindu epics. He does not represent Sita as the idealized model of the submissive and self-sacrificing wife. He represents Sita as someone who challenges societal expectations and actively shapes her own identity and destiny. Her nature to resist and challenge societal norms remains central to the novel.

Sita does not remain confined by domestic roles. She is not dependent upon any male figures in the novel for protection or legitimacy. She trains as a warrior, pursues education, and takes leadership. She remains active in the public and political spheres. The choices that she makes are not traditional. They defy the conventional image of a woman as a caretaker of the home and the bearer of moral virtues. She becomes a symbol of female self-definition. She is someone who rewrites her role from a passive moral reference point to an active agent of change.

Sita directly questions the societal structures that perpetuate female subjugation. She stands strong against gender norms and societal expectations. She takes a critical stand on many issues like the treatment of women, the rigidity of the caste system, and the hypocrisy of courtly expectations. All of these represent a conscious rejection of patriarchal norms. She identifies injustice in forms that are often overlooked, and also makes attempts to correct it. She is not just a victim of patriarchy, but she is also a reformer within it. This portrayal aligns with the feminist theory of reclamation of female voice and agency within traditionally male-dominated narratives. Sita is someone who questions and resists. She redefines her role in society. Gaurang Patel writes in his research paper titled, "*Contemporary Perspective of Sita as a Warrior*":

“In Sita: Warrior of Mithila, Amish Tripathi shatters the stereotype of Sita as a passive princess and portrays an active young princess poised to govern huge India. Recognizing Vishnu, Vishwamitra assures Sita of his choice by handing her a silver knife with a fish sign and a crown, which is said to be the knife of Lord Parashuram, the previous Vishnu.”

Amish Tripathi also comments on and reinterprets Sita's personal relationships. He talks of her relationship with her husband and her adoptive parents. He does this to highlight themes of autonomy and mutual respect. Sita's marriage to Rama is not a passive outcome of familial arrangement. It is a conscious and deliberate choice. She chooses Rama as her life partner after evaluating his character, values, and strength. Sita chooses to get married to Rama after the Swayamvar. Amish Tripathi uses it as a platform for real agency. Here, Sita has a choice and also a criteria for that choice. This elevates her role from a prize to a discerning individual who is about to make a life altering decision. It is not surprising to know that Sita is very loyal and committed to her husband. However, in the eyes of the author, this commitment and loyalty is not blind obedience. Instead, it is the result of shared ideals and mutual respect. The sense of duty that she possesses is not the result of compulsion or some patriarchal submission. It actually takes words from an internalized ethical code which makes it a form of voluntary self aware devotion.

The author also focuses upon elements of consent and refusal which are present in Sita's identity and personality. Throughout the narrative, we find instances of Sita asserting her right to accept or reject proposals. She challenges coercion and insects on dialogue and mutual understanding in all her relationships. Through these actions, we can see her redefining Dharma as a personal and reason duty instead of a rigid code which is dictated by gender. Consent, choice, and ethical reasoning are what form the core of Sita's identity and personality. Amish Tripathi can be seen contesting the traditional notions of marriage and relationships. He makes it very clear that marriage is not a duty and wifehood is not to be understood as submission. He offers his readers a different understanding where love, respect, and equality are foundational.

FEMINISM IN MYTH AND MODERNITY

In *Sita: Warrior of Mithila*, the author raises a very important question. He asks his audience and other critical writers whether the feminist elements of his novel are the outcome of deliberately making certain ideological choices or is it just the result of writing myth for a modern audience. It is true that Amish Tripathi is not a feminist writer. Despite this, the way he has portrayed Sita as a strong and autonomous woman, aligns with the key concerns of the feminist discourse. He reclaims female agencies in a male dominated mythological tradition. Amish Tripathi's interest in exploring ancient Indian philosophies and reinterpreting them in a contemporary light is not hidden from anyone. While doing so, his narratives often feature empowered women who write their own

destiny. These include Sita, Parvateshwar's wife Anandmayi, and even Ravan's sister Surpanakha. The aim of his writing is not usually feminist. Despite this, the outcome of a modern representation is often women with voice, strength, and autonomy. This brings feminist ideals to his narratives. Even though it is not written with feminist intent, his novel functions as feminist literature because of his portrayal of Sita. Depicting her as a strong woman with authority, physical power, and moral clarity disrupts the traditional portrayal by associating her with traits which have been denied to women in classical Indian epics.

Amish Tripathi also uses popular mythology as a medium of gender commentary. Mythological retellings are not only a source of entertainment or cultural preservation but they can also be used as powerful tools for addressing the treatment of women. In his work, Amish Tripathi uses the act of retelling as a form of resistance by challenging dominant patriarchal readings. He offers myth as a space for feminist reinterpretation. By combining modernity with myth, writers like Amish Tripathi encourage the readers to question inherited values. When historical characters like Sita are shown as warriors and leaders, it forces the readers to reevaluate gender roles embedded in religious and cultural memory. This encourages young readers to imagine themselves not as passive carriers of tradition but as active shapers of it.

Mythological fiction is also a very culturally accessible tool to propagate feminist ideas. While academic feminist text often remains limited to a scholarly audience, mythological fiction often reaches a wide audience due to its religious significance and spiritual importance. People from different classes, genders, and places, are more likely to engage with mythological fiction instead of academic feminist texts. This helps democratize feminist themes. By placing them in more familiar narratives, writers like Amish Tripathi are able to subtly shift public discourse around women's rights and representation. The use of accessible language and dramatic story telling help Amish Tripathi in contributing to the popular feminist imagination.

CONCLUSION

Amish Tripathi said in an interview:

“Of course! The perception of Sita as a devoted wife is the one which was portrayed in the 1980s or in Valmiki's Ramayana. I have portrayed her as a warrior, a strong woman. Strength here doesn't necessarily mean physical strength. It means being mentally strong as well, to have the ability to stand up and face challenges. Sita, in this book, has feminine power.”

Amish Tripathi has used his novel *Sita: Warrior of Mithila* to reclaim the image of Sita and free her from the constraints of ancient patriarchy. He has presented her as a symbol of strength, agency, and self-determination. He has not only created a different version of her character but he

has laid the foundation for an ideological shift by freeing Sita from centuries of silence, obedience, sacrifice, and suffering. For him, Sita is not just the passive partner of Rama but she is a complete individual in herself with her own independent identity and existence. She is a warrior, a leader, a princess, and a strategist. She defines her dharma and challenges the limitations imposed by tradition. The act of reclaiming Sita's identity is part of a larger movement in contemporary literature where mythological heroines are presented as complex beings with their own individual characteristics instead of just symbols of virtue. He gives voice and depth to the character of Sita, and by doing so, he has reshaped cultural memory. This also leads to the creation of role models who teach us about strength instead of just submission and suffering. This makes Sita a powerful tool in Tripathi's writing. Through her, he reconstructs feminine identity and balances tradition with transformation, reverence with rebellion, and myth with modernity.

This act of retelling also has broader objectives and implications. Retelling has been growing as a trend in English literature with a special focus on female characters and figures. This has led to a significant cultural and literary development. This changed narrative challenges the patriarchal nature and authority of ancient texts and creates a space for alternative interpretations which is often driven by feminist concerns. The creativity that comes with retelling also allows mythology to evolve from a static inheritance into a more dynamic tradition.

WORKS CITED

- TRIPATHI, AMISH. *Sita: Warrior of Mithila*. WESTLAND PUBLICATIONS. 2017.
- GUPTA, AYUSHI. *Warrior, Leader, Icon: Representation of Sita in Amish Tripathi's 'Sita: Warrior of Mithila'*. IJRPR. Vol (5), Issue (8), August (2024), Page – 07-13.
<https://ijrpr.com/uploads/V5ISSUE8/IJRPR32001.pdf>
- PANDEY, ASHISH. *An Analysis of Mythical Elements in Amish Tripathi's Sita: Warrior of Mithila*. Vol. 24:4. 216-227. 2024.
- https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/books/interviews/i-have-portrayed-sita-as-a-warrior-a-strong-woman-says-amish-about-his-upcoming-book/articleshow/57854968.cms?utm_source=chatgpt.com
- PATEL, GAURANG. *Contemporary Perspective of Sita as a Warrior*. INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH AND ANALYTICAL REVIEWS. 2022. 9. 395-401.



EARN YOUR MBA

WWW.IIMPS.IN



Accreditation & Ranking



UGC / NCTE Approved.

INFO@IIMPS.IN

☎ 011-41005174

RESEARCH
GATEWAY

STOP PLAGIARISM



Arogyam Ayurveda
Holistic Healing through herbs



AROGYAM
ONLINE

PARIVARTAN PSYCHOLOGY CENTER

परिवर्तन

COLOR PSYCHOLOGY : HOW COLOR AFFECT YOUR CHILD



BLUE

Calms your Child's
Mind & Body

YELLOW

Promotes Concentration,
Stimulates the Memory

PINK

Evokes Empathy,
makes your Child Calm

RED

Excites and energizes
your Child's body

GREEN

Improves Reading speed
and Comprehension

www.parivartan4u.com



परिवर्तन

Confuse about your children's future?

भारतीय भाषा, शिक्षा, साहित्य एवं शोध

ISSN 2321 – 9726

WWW.BHARTIYASHODH.COM



**INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH JOURNAL OF
MANAGEMENT SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

ISSN – 2250 – 1959 (O) 2348 – 9367 (P)

WWW.IRJMST.COM



**INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH JOURNAL OF
COMMERCE, ARTS AND SCIENCE**

ISSN 2319 – 9202

WWW.CASIRJ.COM



**INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH JOURNAL OF
MANAGEMENT SOCIOLOGY & HUMANITIES**

ISSN 2277 – 9809 (O) 2348 - 9359 (P)

WWW.IRJMSH.COM



**INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH JOURNAL OF SCIENCE
ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY**

ISSN 2454-3195 (online)

WWW.RJSET.COM



**INTEGRATED RESEARCH JOURNAL OF
MANAGEMENT, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION**

ISSN 2582-5445

WWW.IRJMSI.COM



**JOURNAL OF LEGAL STUDIES, POLITICS
AND ECONOMICS RESEARCH**

WWW.JLPER.COM

JLPE