

Fresh Landscapes in Indian Culture – Sita the Creator of Space for Women Learning Skills

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Abstract

Sita has been embedded with a social stigma that has failed to expose the real nature, calibre, talent for Indian society. The most powerful woman in world history has been denied due to her identity and real value. This research is a search for the real calibre of Sita and her skills, talents and administrative potential which could be a significant role model for modern women to learn from her. Sita's versatile talents become a learning skill for today women in Indian society. Learnings skills get from Sita makes Indian women lead their life for betterment and helps to draw their life how they want them. The courage of Sita identifies the real women in the modern world in various situations. This research dealt with modern women to correlate the ideas of Sita from ancient days. The skills of Sita express the thoughts and emotions to the women to know who they are and also degrade the serf thoughts in the minds of women today. This research integrates the women of modernity with the vision of Sita. This paper provides new fresh thoughts of Sita in newer perspectives which could provide new spaces for Indian women and their identities.

Keywords: modernity, skills of Sita, space for Indian women, women identities

1. Introduction

The identities of the Indian feminine gender have been adjusted and sub adjudicated and misrepresented misanthropically rather than with cherished and wilful representations. As there are ordeals to fight with husband honour pride and prestige to defend, family to be honoured, children to be brought up and submission and surrender are idealistic.

The glorified Sita with devotion and love towards a husband who follows him to forest, with isolation and children to manage & finally the last abode to heaven with a second acid test on fire – are we providing good lessons to the women in India? What are we trying to convey? Who is an ideal woman? In Ramayana, the glory of Sita is portrayed or the male chauvinistic Rama, the so-called ideal god reveals that fewer mortals would behave even more cruelly as husbands in the 21st century is a reality today.

Is Sita still relevant today? What does she symbolise to the world on Indian traditions, family, husband and relationships? Has Sita to be transformed or the Indian country who behaves as a mute spectator and approves of indignity to women has to be transformed? This philosophical exploration is indeed a transforming journey into the character and portrayal of Sita & her idealisation, with symbols, images and stories to make her more explicit for Indian women. This writing is a search into the self-identities of Indian women and the mismatch with Sita or the wrong idealisation of Sita in a wrongful manner. Gender has its impact on human living and culture as this journey would explore the fatal realities of Sita and her relevance.

Modernity and Sita are not integrative in this country as there are hidden agendas and perspectives for gender submissiveness and in not portraying the social and economic contributions of hidden. The hidden veils and covered identities remain as women nature in families with culture, practices and honour pride to support it. The unfortunate Indian women and their recognition, image and value is not preserved but destroyed and tarnished with cultural

malignant. Is this our Indian image of women in our society that we would like to project and portray in the world? It is a glorified sin and heavens are promised for this punishment, sub judication and humiliation of Indian women. What a powerful image of men which is shared in the lives of women who do not have self-identities, representations and expression of their wishes and goals in Indian society.

2. Literature Review

The personal, social, identity-oriented crisis tend to prevail in Indian women since the Vedic ages and finds its powerful inscriptions with Sita. Is Sita the end of hope for Indian women and their social relevance or can she bring in new identities, forms of representations and provide new imagery of living in a global society (Banerjee, 1986). Let us explore these tendencies, attitudes and popular male-oriented perceptions which had the painful living of millions of women in this country and see whether Sita could provide unique solutions and strategies for women and her living (Huxtable & Zimmerman, 1972). There is a need for the immediate resurrection of Indian Sita with glory, dignity and pride for future paths of hope, revival and rejuvenation of Indian women in the present century.

2.1 Bondage & Bonding - Bending

The emotional bondage and bonding of Indian women with love, affection and care with attention for family, relationships and pride have evaded her total potential and identity. The identity of women cries and craves for bolder images and contours which are not provided (Goodman, 1996). There is a need to provide more canvass and spaces for her wilful identities, roles and representations which had been denied.

It had found that Ramayana had 24000 slokas with 7 Kanda's or major chapters (Saklani, 2018). The poet Valmiki never tried to portray Ram as a divine god but his attributes of good quality made him qualify to be godly in the later ascetic periods of life (Brockington, Brockington, & Bailey, 2002). He was made a god in the later parts of the society which assigned him the position of God (Arya, 2002).

2.2 Self-Identities, Self-Representation and Self-Worth

Although the writers have written, authors have opined and critical examiners have examined and historians have dissected, Sita remains to be a mysterious identity with a lot of obedience and to preserve culture and safe the male chauvinistic pride of Rama, the holy husband only descended from heavens, directly (Kelkar & Vane, 2003). Sita has been portrayed as an embodiment of earth, which ought to be patient, kind, loving with care and affection like a mother (Macdonell, 1919). These are distractions and misguided thoughts which have rendered Sita to compromise, adjust and advocate for Rama in the forest, and with Ravana (Lal, 2008).

It was not Rama who rescued Sita, it was Sita's confidence in Rama which rescued her. Self-confidence in tough and challenging situations have never been attributed to the nature and behaviour of Indian women (Sankalia, 1973). This has created a distorted self-image, self-identity and self-representation and her self-worth has been always low and ebbing, thanks to the glamorous Rama who has been praised for torturing Sita (Hatcher, 2006). Rama is the pivotal instrument in demoralising Sita, her name, chastity has been questioned with authority by him. The spineless Rama accepts that he is not able to save Sita from the inhumane responses of men in his own country (Hunt, 2007). The godly pathetic response is provided in the following lines: "My Lord! Agni! This Sita is pure enough to purify three worlds. She is as chaste as snow. Even as a good man can never abandon his fame, so, Sita cannot be abandoned by me. If there is one thing, I am afraid of, it is the censure of the world of men" (Subramanyam, 2001).

The world adores the younger brother of Rama, Lakshmana also curses Sita and says women are bound to behave meanly, in the following lines: "...I dare not answer, Maithili, for you are a deity in my eyes. And yet inappropriate words from a woman come as nothing new..." (Goldman, 1991). Identical male chauvinism has been the character of the Rama family and the misdeed as represented is done by Kaikeyi, another woman. It is also found that it is represented that women committed mistakes and men rectify and restore peace and happiness in families. How ironic and how it has been passed on for generations to preserve the male domination and humiliation of Sita (Priyadarshini, Mohan, Hariharasudan, & Sangeetha, 2021). Sita is an embodiment of Indian society and her torments and sufferings have indicated that women would be given this treatment in this country, and the agony continues in modern society, shameful glories never end (Pandeewari, Hariharasudan & Kot, 2021).

These cultural identities and identifications of women and their place in society have always been challenged. Here traditions pave the way for wreaths on women living in Indian society? Is this the society that could stoop to this level for Indian women? What does Sita represent in Indian society and what message she leaves for future India would be explored in the dimension of feminism and women Identities?

2.3 Feminism and Identities of Indian Women: Sita the Future?

As Sita is the embodiment of ethnic representations in Indian society, there is a need to provide new impetus, with meaning and answers for women from her. What new answers can she provide to us? Although we could see that bonding, family, traditions and husband have guided Sita living and goals, we can also find new meanings and associations in her life and living (Hariharasudan & Pandeewari, 2020). A feministic outlook can provide us with new dimensions of thinking, meaning and interpretations for women in India. She is a solution to all the miseries and problems which Indian women, as she had faced the worst even by mid-fourth century B.C (Vaidya, 1906). The next section would revisit Sita from a feministic perspective and provide solutions and strategies for women living in India.

2.4 Meanings of Representative Representations of Sita – Glorious Embodiment

Peace, love affection friendliness & glory with patience dedication and commitment towards goals are the virtues of Sita but have been attributed to Godly insecure glamorous Rama (Lodhia, 2015). Sita was not wrong but proven to be wrong from the eyes of men. The selfless sacrifices of Sita and her pious living have been attributed to the divinely Rama who rescues her for his pride and in the intention to save women's dignity. Thus, the casual attitude of men towards women in society can only be attributed to the sinful pathways of Rama, the glamorous god (Kaur, 2016).

She is a symbol of power, authority, leadership and humane relationships. Rama is born human with relationships but Sita is humane with love and simplicity, which Rama has to learn and adopt in his next birth (Rahiman, Kodikal, Biswas & Hariharasudan, 2020). The patriarchal settings had added flames into Sita life as we could see that she is tested twice before the lustrous eyes of men in Ayodhya, pride of the world, shameless country (Madan, 2017). She takes equality in her nature and in representing her views, it is clearly understood equality is the birthright of women, which cannot be claimed as it is there, which has to be asserted by women (Ingalagi, Nawaz, Rahiman, Hariharasudan & Hundekar, 2021). The truthful representations of Sita & her character would be vividly presented with an effective supported methodology, which would be given in the next section.

3. Research Methodology

This research would be diagnostic and qualitative. This research would diagnose the various dimensions and aspects of living of Rama and Sita – the duo in dual perspectives. Although they had lived together, male chauvinistic society had separated them from peaceful living and happiness even for the Godly King Rama. The study would compare and contrast the dual glorious living of Sita and the glamorous living of Rama.

The study would evaluate and ascertain whether Sita is modern or ultra-modern with high tech technologies that are still relevant and Indian women could reconnect to her. Feminism and liberal feminism are the two basic concepts on which Sita would be evaluated and ascertained. Can Indian women be feministic in their living and approach life with liberal feminism following the footsteps of Sita? Can the Indian male chauvinistic society allow that to happen? What has to be done and how does it have to be done?

3.1 Research Analysis Method

Descriptive, evaluative and interpretative methods of analysis are used for this research. The study describes the contributions and glories of Sita as a future for Indian men. The study would evaluate the role of Rama and his glamorous pampered perspective which had an impact on the living and livelihood of Sita. Interpretative method of writing has been used to interpret the role of Sita in Indian men.

3.2 Problem Statement

Sita, the universal embodiment for cultural and social integration of the world, has always been misrepresented and misinterpreted. There is a need for dynamic perspective and thinking on Sita, which could provide new possibilities and thinking by Indian women. As these dimensions of thinking have not been approached or researched earlier, this research is an attempt to find out solutions for women and their dignified living.

3.3 Research Questions

1. Is Sita still relevant today for Indian women?
2. Can the embodiment and cultural representation continue in the 21st century in India?
3. What could men learn from the living of Sita?
4. What is the final message of Sita for Indian men?

3.4 Objectives of the Study

1. To evaluate the relevance of Sita in the world
2. To examine the role of Sita as a social embodiment of Indian women in 21st century
3. To indicate the futuristic message of Sita in modernity and challenging the 21st century

3.5 Scope of the Study

1. The study covers the glories of Sita and her relevance in the 21st century for Indian women
2. The study uses interpretative analysis for providing new perspectives and thinking on the relevance of Sita

3.6 Limitations of the Study

1. Although the study deals with Rama and his living, it has been dealt with as a comparison with Sita only
2. This study focuses on the contributions and glories of Sita only

3.7 The outcome of the Study

1. The traditional teachings of Ramayana must be done with feministic thinking and discussions has to be arranged in schools and colleges which would develop love and affection with mutual respect for women in our future generations.
 2. Feminism and its glory have to be inculcated in Indian living with acculturation methods to be adopted which would provide new dimensions of approaches to women by men.
 3. Ma Sita solutions for modern living would be provided as a framework to this study, for Indian women
- Discussions and evaluations: Modern Sita – Celestial orchestra for Indian men

Self-will, freedom and independence in decision making have been the core of Sita and her living (Chakravarti, 2018). Although she was praised for her obedience, sacrifices and virtues she is truly benevolent in her thinking, outlook and perspective which Rama must learn (Devi, 2018). She is a symbol of modern freedom, independence in the will, thinking and approaches for modern women.

4. Discussion

Sita was dependent on independence and interdependence and she also teaches men and their need for becoming more humane in thinking and supportive to women in sharing dignity and honour (Patel, Scott, Lundberg-Love, & Galusha-Glasscock, 2016). Liberty, freedom and financial independence has already been there for Indian women in modern society which would put Indian women in place. Such refined subtler strategies could be learnt from Sita who was powerful and significant due to her education, heritage and family background in Ayodhya, despite Rama being on the throne (Hariharasudan, 2020).

Throne does not matter as she was affectionate to Ayodhya society, she was more popular than Rama. Rama had to find excuses as he could not digest Sita and her popularity, the lame-duck was the washerman and the second time she was sent to the forest (Roy, 2016). She was brave, she brought up her children made Rama surrender to her sons – Lava and Kusha Challenges are faced bravely and independently by Sita but the unfortunate and incapable Ram just cries as he does not know how to manage his kingdom, sorry state of affairs. Rama is the epitome of kingship but Sita is an integrative factor that has twinned and fabricated Indian history (Pandeewari, Hariharasudan & Nawaz, 2021). There can be a Ramayana without Rama, but there can be no India without Sita, such is her contributions and legacy in this country. Sita provides the lessons of interdependency to Indian men as they are independent with psychological problems, they may not be able to proceed in the same directions, as they would find new societies for Indian women.

4.1 Freedom, Liberty and Decision Making

Although Sita looks conservative, traditional and husband oriented, she has freedom and liberty in her actions and she is not bound by Rama but by her own set of principles. Her self-identity is intact but Rama and his self-identity are exposed in the uglier way twice in Indian culture and history. This also is pardoned with humility with liberty which is prevalent with Sita (Chakravarti, 1983). She has her own independent will and decision-making skills which makes her the role model for Indian men. Rama would always land in an unfortunate mess and as usual, Sita rescues in his personal and official living, pitiable creature.

The Celestial orchestra of Sita strikes again with loudness which spreads all over the world that Indian women are having freedom, liberty and decision making which Indian men lack, obviously they are like Lord Rama, so sad

(Kishwar, 2004).

4.2 Polarised Valmiki and Twisted Rama's Identity

Rama was loved by Valmiki a lot and this love towards him had made him portray him as noble, honest with integrity and virtue. He was the person to kill a monkey by hiding without having the guts to face directly (Mangharam, 2009). This is praised by Valmiki as a right tactic, how polarised and idolised he is on Rama. The twisted tales of Rama are the own poetic versions, for which Rama could not be blamed as he is neither so holy nor so innocent.

The Daring Sita has a Celestial orchestra again for Indian men, as they would find braver women who are courageous and fighting, who would challenge every man's action and demand an explanation (Sarkar, 2016). Sheer surrender of men is expected in vividly contrasting the historical traditional female submissiveness portrayed in Indian history. So Sita hits the Celestial orchestra hard that the future men would be enslaved by Indian women who would teach and dictate new lessons and directions (Thapar, 1993).

4.3 Women Representations & Contributions

Since time immemorial the traditional practices with traditional ordeals have undermined the importance, significance and representation of Indian women. It has been very unfortunate that despite the contributions made by women in all sectors in the country, their contributions have not been empirical (Mahendravada, 2018). The value of their contributions is immeasurable where small men are incapable of making such calculations. The contributions of Indian women in history and tradition need not be vouched by male prejudiced societies (Mathur, 2008).

4.4 300 Ramayana's – Representation of Realities

Ramanujan's sensational work has conveyed and documented that there are thousands of Ramayana which are prevalent and Rama is just an ideal character that writers intended to depict. In this work, we could see that Rama is portrayed as a human who is with all flaws and mischiefs like a natural man, as he engages in normal life (Ramanujan, 1991). Neither is saintly or godly. These Ramayana texts are convenient as they ignore the narrative of Tamil Nadu and its relevance as these texts focus only on North India.

4.5 Sita Kills Ravana – Act of Bravery and New Avatar

Satakantharavana, a part of Ramayana elucidates that Rama beheaded Ravana, a ten-headed person, in that place a hundred-headed version appears. Rama gets terrified and Sita taking arms kills this 100 headed Ravana. So, it is historical that Sita killed Ravana to avenge her anger, sorrow and displeasure. Thai Rama Kirti depicts Rama as a simple ordinary human being rather than as a God portrayed by Valmiki.

In the Jain version of Ramayana, it is impure to take a person's life which is against their principles. So, it is Lakshmana who killed Rama and Rama as he is pure abodes to heaven. The basic pride of Rama being a hero has been shattered as different versions have definitive and differentiating conclusions on the end of Ravana. The end of Ravana is not the end of Ramayana indeed as we find Sita, unable to bear the second litmus test goes back to earth.

5. Conclusion

Sita has provided the unique message that there will be more Rama's with subjective intention, with more and more Ranas with abducting intention, there is a need for dynamic modern fiercely Sita connectivity with younger India. She also provides a stronger message that women cannot be taken for granted by less mortal men, for her love, affection, emotions and attachments to family and society. Indian women would assume futuristic meaningful contributions in a male dominant society. The Indian society would transform with women taking the central course of action. Sita has rung the Celestial orchestra for Indian men– Beware, be cautious, its women-centred society for men to be alert, subdued and cautious.

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