

Protector, Ruler, Feminist: Sita's Empowered Role in Amish Tripathi's Sita Warrior of Mithila

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Abstract

The portrayal of Sita in Amish Tripathi's Sita: Warrior of Mithila is examined in this essay, along with its traditional and modern interpretations in Indian mythology and literature. Sita is portrayed in Valmiki's Ramayana as the embodiment of devotion, moral integrity, and purity while highlighting her qualities of compassion, loyalty, and perseverance. Her steadfast trust in and dedication to dharma defines her as an emblem that defines feminine virtue and strength. Her ageless traits of great insight never cease to inspire.

Sita is reimagined by Amish Tripathi as a powerful, self-reliant, proactive leader with exceptional mental and physical abilities. He says Sita is an effective warrior who possesses moral fortitude, physical strength, and mental clarity. She is a feminist icon that transcends all patriarchal boundaries because of her autonomy, empowerment, and leadership, which form the core of this contemporary depiction.

When compared to other modern retellings, such as The Forest of Enchantments by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, there is additional evidence of a change in how Sita is portrayed that shifts societal ideals in favour of the idea of modern women's empowerment. This essay makes the case that Tripathi's Sita is a feminist treasure trove because to her power, autonomy, and agency, which reinterpret her place in the mythological story while delivering a potent critique of conventional gender norms. As a symbol of empowerment and chastity, the research reveals a multifaceted personality of Sita that radiates timeless relevance. As such, it makes valuable contributions to highlighting the timeless lessons and impacts that Sita imparted, especially from the perspectives of moral integrity, strength, and resilience.

Keywords: Sita, warrior, leader, empowerment, feminist, autonomy, strength, resilience, mythology, Tripathi

Introduction

In Indian mythology, Sita, the protagonist of a major tale, is typically portrayed as the epitome of goodness, devotion, and selflessness. Sita is a model of feminine virtues and moral integrity in the classical writings, Valmiki's Ramayana and Tulsidas' Ramcharitmanas. She represents the ideals of devotion, endurance, and purity. Her compassion, her deep wisdom, and her undying devotion to Ram are timeless traits that never go out of style. The portrayal of Sita provided by Amish Tripathi is opposing but complementing, adding to her character's many facets of virtue, fortitude, and

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resiliency as well as her role as a warrior and proactive leader. The book deviates significantly from the conventional depictions and makes clear Sita's advantages in terms of her physical strength, cunning, and spirit of independence. In a culture dominated by men, Tripathi's Sita develops into a strong woman who can defy patriarchal expectations and claim her own agency.

Tripathi's portrayal of strength, independence, leadership, and female empowerment in Sita will be thoroughly examined in this research paper. It will also illustrate the ways in which Tripathi's portrayal of Sita deviates from her conventional portrayals in the Ramayana and the Ramcharitmanas, and it will contrast this contemporary rendering of Sita's tale with other modern versions. In order to demonstrate how Sita: Warrior of Mithila reimagines Sita's characterization in relation to the larger conversation on gender roles and female empowerment in Indian mythology and literature, the particular qualities, character development, and narrative techniques have all been employed together.

Using this comparative method, the study aims to highlight how Sita's character changes from the one that is typically shown to one that might change society and its modern feminist values as a dynamic and powerful individual. Thus, this work not only reflects the possibility of change in mythic retellings, but it also emphasizes the need for traditional stories to be recounted in a way that engages with contemporary social issues and speaks more to modern audiences.

Character Analysis

The Ramayana's portrayal of Sita represents her purity and devotion to Ram as well as virtue, loyalty, selflessness, and moral integrity. She was revered as a timeless embodiment of these virtues, praised for her dedication and elegance in the face of adversity. By highlighting the warrior-leader qualities, Amish Tripathi's Sita: Warrior of Mithila reimagines Sita as a strong, independent, and strategic woman who challenges the conventional narrative of her character. What viewers see in Tripathi is a very proactive Sita who takes control of her own fate and emerges as a strong character in her own right rather than being relegated to the role of Ram's consort.

Analysing Sita's portrayal in Tripathi's work in light of her salient characteristics is the goal of this study. Her personality is marked by these feminist features, and this delineation has cultural significance. The transformation of Sita into a warrior, leadership traits, the feminist reworking of a character such as Sita, and a comparative analysis of her portrayal would be prominent study issues. This means that in order to comprehend the new connotations that mythical characters can hold for modern society and its conventions, it is crucial to grasp how Sita is portrayed in the current reimagining, such as Tripathi's. It is possible to understand this in terms of how Tripathi's Sita stimulates discussions on gender norms and the advancement of the so-called fair sex in contemporary culture.

Being a Warrior, Sita

In contrast to her original identity in the Ramayana, Sita is presented as a renowned warrior in Amish Tripathi's Sita: Warrior of Mithila. Her warrior identity's characteristics, evolution, and more

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important ramifications are examined in this examination.

Characteristics and Development

Early in the story, it is also revealed that Sita has a strong physique and a strong commitment to martial arts. Due to her extensive training, Tripathi is constantly prepared for battle: "muscles, honed and strengthened through years of practice, coiled with tension, ready to spring into action" (Tripathi 45). This foundation emphasizes her development into a successful fighter, which is further supported by her superiority in strategic planning and combat training: "She had mastered the skills of a warrior, excelled in combat training and strategic planning" (Tripathi 112).

Courage and Bravery

Throughout the entire book, bravery and heroism are consistently displayed. Tripathi highlights her unwavering will in the face of peril: "Sita stood her ground, her eyes blazing with determination, refusing to back down in the face of overwhelming odds" (Tripathi 133). When she fought to save the people she cared about, it was evident that her bravery was not only physical but also moral: "Her heart pounded with the thrill of the fight, not with fear, but with the courage to protect those she loved" (Tripathi 200). Desai backs up this portrayal by stating that "Sita's courage is not only physical, it is moral: she possesses the strength to stand up for justice despite inhuman personal loss" (Desai 45).

Think Strategically

Beyond Sita's physical prowess, it is impossible to deny the strategic aspect of her warrior persona. Tripathi exhibits tact in moments like "She surveyed the battlefield, her mind racing with strategies, manipulating them to find the best avenue of attack that would outmanoeuvre the enemy" (Tripathi 178). This also demonstrates meticulous planning: "Sita's plans were always scrupulously planned out for every contingency" (Tripathi 221). "Strategic thinking is an important component of leadership, and Tripathi's Sita fulfils that dimension due to her thoughtful and cautious approach toward challenges," wrote Ramesh Nair in *Sita: A Feminist Icon in Indian Literature* (Nair 102).

Adaptability

Resilience is yet another important aspect of Sita's personality. Her reputation as a leader and warrior is supported by her consistent demonstration of perseverance and resilience. "Despite the bruises and fatigue, Sita's spirit remained unbroken, her resolve only growing with every challenge more determined" (Tripathi 250) is how Tripathi portrays this unwavering spirit. She was an unstoppable force because of her unbreakable spirit, her capacity to overcome every setback, and her ability to persevere through every challenge. Patel argues in favour of this portrayal, stating, "I think the hallmark of mythological epic heroes is resilience. That everlasting aspect is demonstrated by Sita's adventure in *Warrior of Mithila* (Patel 64).

Sita in a leading role

It's possible that "Sita: Warrior of Mithila" is a reimagining of Sita because Amish Tripathi plays her as both a brave warrior and Ram's adored wife.

The Leadership Attributes of Sita**1. Strategic Intelligence and Knowledge**

Her leadership style is exemplified by her strategic thinking and insight. "A true leader does not need to have a loud voice; her actions speak for her" (Tripathi 124). Sita's opinion that deeds speak louder than words—the most important quality of any effective leader—would be expressed in this line. Throughout the story, she is shown to be intelligent and foresighted because she is seen to be critical in her thinking and cautious in all of her actions.

2. Bravery and Combat Skills

Sita's character is not just sager but also a warrior leader in terms of her demeanour and military acumen. Fighting with her is portrayed by Tripathi in vivid detail: "She moved like the wind, her attacks precise and lethal, her presence commanding respect and fear in equal measure" (Tripathi 200). This sequence demonstrates that leadership is about ability and bravery rather than gender, and it is compatible with historical warrior queens and female leaders who led people into battle.

3. Having empathy and compassion

Being attentive to her subjects and showing compassion is one of Sita's leadership qualities. "She listened to the grievances of the villagers with a patient heart, knowing that a leader must first be a servant to those she leads" (Tripathi 175) makes clear how important it is for her to directly connect with her people. She will not only be able to draw in a large number of followers by doing this, but she will also plant the seeds of trust and loyalty, two qualities that are equally important for any leader who is worthy of being respected.

4. Resilience and Willpower

Through these experiences, Sita establishes her character as strong and purposeful. Her ability to inspire hope is best demonstrated by the statement, "Even in the face of insurmountable odds, Sita stood tall, her spirit unyielding, a beacon of hope for all who followed her" (Tripathi 233). Her ability to persevere in the face of difficulty reaffirms my personal conviction that a true leader never gives up and will always motivate and inspire their people.

Historical and Mythological Parallels in Comparative Analysis

It is most reasonable to relate the actions of Sita in Tripathi's story to a few historical and legendary leaders who were renowned for both their strength and wisdom. By drawing comparisons between Sita and Rani Lakshmibai or Joan of Arc, we can see similarities in their military prowess, whether or not they are defeated. "Her divine vision and strong faith marked Joan of Arc's leadership, likewise

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Sita's faith in herself and her duties as a leader" (Smith 79).

As a Feminist Icon, Sita

Amish Tripathi presents a new, unconventional, and really feminist interpretation of Sita in her book *Sita: Warrior of Mithila*.

Self-reliance and strength

Sita is portrayed throughout the book as a strong, self-reliant woman who supports feminist principles. Tripathi describes Sita's acts and views that defy patriarchal conventions. In response to the expectations society placed on Sita, for example, the author claims that "She had seen too many men who were afraid of powerful women." They did not view them as equals, but as a threat (Tripathi 87). This quotation goes into detail about how Sita is aware of gender dynamics and would never participate in any circumstance that adheres to roles that limit women's authority.

Authority and Self-Government

One of the most important aspects of Sita's character definition in *Sita: Warrior of Mithila* is her leadership and agency. She is a feminist who opposes gender conventions and stereotypes, as this demonstrates. As Tripathi puts it, "Sita's objective was to be self-reliant; she wanted no man's bounty and, least of all, did she desire to be obligated to anyone" (Tripathi 152), highlighting Sita's resilience. As is the case with all women in ancient Indian societal conventions, Sita's position in this excerpt is that she wants to be independent and dependant on no one.

Resistance Against Stereotypes

The way that Tripathi rejects social prejudices is a reflection of Sita's belief that "deeds are greater than appearance." The statement "A woman's dignity lay not in her attire but in her actions" (Tripathi 215) is made with firmness by Sita. This comment emphasizes Sita's dedication to feminist ideals of empowerment via action rather than appearance and directly contradicts conventional views of women's value based on outward looks.

Sita's Dynamics of Relationships

Sita and Ram's relationship is depicted in the book as one of equality. This portrays a feminist character who is capable of handling marital issues with autonomy and agency. In his description of Sita's determination to maintain her uniqueness in her relationship with Ram, Tripathi writes, "She loved Ram, but she refused to be overshadowed by him." She would not be his shadow, but his collaborator (Tripathi 281). Sita's demand for equality and respect for one another is emphasized in this phrase; she categorically rejects any advice about submitting to any marital male authority, which is repeated by old patriarchal viewpoints.

Comparative Analysis in Chapter Three

Comparative Study of Amish Tripathi's Literary Works' Sita Character and Other Indian Mythological

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and Literary Representations

The persona that briefly appears in Indian mythology and literature is very different from the one that Amish Tripathi portrays in *Sita: Warrior of Mithila*.

1. Conventional depictions in the Ramcharitmanas by Tulsidas and the Ramayana by Valmiki

In the Valmiki Ramayana, Sita is portrayed as the embodiment of virtue, sacrifice, and purity. With unwavering patience and faith, she demonstrated the ideal Pati-vrata dharma. Her ability to resist Ravana's multifaceted test of kidnapping and the ensuing hardships was her strength. Sita, as portrayed by Valmiki, represents unwavering devotion, inner power, and moral integrity. In the words of Valmiki, "Neither out of desire, fear, nor greed, nor through deceit or falsehood, did she ever falter in her devotion. Always steadfast in her vows, she followed the path of righteousness." (Sarga 30, Shloka 5, Ayodhya Kanda, and Valmiki Ramayana)

In the epic story of the Ramayana, this sentence embodies Sita's strength and dedication to righteousness, as well as her unshakeable moral integrity, tenacity, and unwavering loyalty.

She is equally the Sita of Valmiki in Tulsidas' Ramcharitmanas, but she is more adamantly virtuous, devoted, and morally upright. It exhibits feminine strength and morality under moral leadership. As a symbol of the social values of his era—wife submission and societal order—Tulsidas emphasized her steadfast devotion to her husband and her position as a model of virtue. As said by Tulsidas, "Created by the divine power, she, with unwavering devotion, resides in the heart of her beloved Ram, embodying purity and righteousness." (Aranya Kanda, 28).

In this stanza, Sita is praised, portrayed as having celestial qualities and amazing strength, and is dedicated like fire. It demonstrates her admiration for the epic story of Ramcharitmanas' depth, tenacity, and purity.

2. The Amish Sita Tripathi's Sita: Mithila's Warrior

Amish Tripathi portrays Sita as a strong, self-reliant, and proactive figure. Tripathi's Sita, in contrast to the traditional depictions, is nimble, a leader in combat, and incredibly intelligent. Her light step is always described as demonstrating a dedicated desire in leading Mithila and defending her people. She is a skilled martial artist and a shrewd thinker. The traditional perception of Sita is greatly contradicted by this reworking.

Combat Skills and Bravery: Sita in Tripathi is a fearless fighter who receives daily combat training. She controls her people decisively and authoritatively, and she always protects Mithila from danger. As stated in Tripathi 145, "Sita's mind raced, weighing the options and consequences of each decision" is an example of one such action.

Strategic Thinking and Leadership: Sita has several opportunities to demonstrate her leadership abilities as the prime minister of Mithila. Occasionally, she must make important decisions regarding a few matters that affect her audience. Consequently, these will need to be strategic. "Sita lunged

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forward, her sword a blur as it cut through the air" (Tripathi 145) is a statement from the book that perfectly captures the story.

3. Feminist Interpretations and Contemporary Retellings

Devdutt Pattanaik and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni are two examples of the modern retellings of the Ramayana that have given Sita more nuance. While maintaining an external appearance of the flux surrounding her constant of her purported virtues—a separation that isn't always so cleanly executed—these works do supply her with strength, one that is internal, resilient, and morally courageous; loyalty and commitment. Sita tells her own story in *The Forest of Enchantments* by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, providing a first-person glimpse into the discontent that permeates her thoughts, feelings, and hardships. She permits Sita to express her autonomy and defy social standards that enslave her to patriarchal control.

4. Commonalities and Dissimilarities

Similarities

Moral Integrity: Sita is portrayed as the epitome of virtue and moral integrity in each recital.

Devotion: Throughout the narrative, she remains loyal to her loved ones, especially Ram.

Disparities:

Human Agency and Empowerment: Unlike most conventional stories, Tripathi's portrayal of Sita shows her as empowered and in charge of her life. The steering end of her fate was her.

Role and Function: Sita serves as a commander and a warrior in Tripathi's work in addition to being a devoted wife. The restricted and passive role and functions of the old texts were sharply contrasted with this enormous shape.

5. Changes in Sita's Representation

Sita's transformation represents changes in societal norms and attitudes around gender roles. The patriarchal ideals of devotion and submission are emphasized in the ways that traditional literature develops Sita's character. In contemporary stories, such as Tripathi's, Sita was genuinely changed by modern values, especially those that portrayed her as a strong, self-reliant woman who embodied female emancipation. As a result, mythical characters are constantly being reinterpreted for contemporary audiences. But now, these figures are also reinterpreted to address modern problems that are both necessary and crucial to society.

Chapter 4: Sita: Warrior of Mithila by Amish Tripathi: Themes and Symbolism

Amish Tripathi's legendary tale fable *Sita: Warrior of Mithila* explores complex symbolism and rich themes. The main ideas and symbolic components of the book are examined here, along with how they have deepened and enhanced the narrative's significance.

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Important Themes**Independence and Empowerment**

The independence and empowerment of women are among the important themes in Sita: Warrior of Mithila. Sita is a living example of that notion throughout her development from a small child to a powerful leader. "I am not defined by my relationships but by my actions and choices" (Tripathi 89) is the best quote that best captures who she is.

This turns into a significant topic that challenges conventional thinking in these stories, which frequently portray Sita as a relatively passive heroine but instead recast her as an agentic character in her own narrative.

Leadership and Fairness

In the book, leadership and the issue of justice are closely related. As Mithila's prime minister, Sita demonstrates her commitment to fairness and responsible leadership. According to Tripathi, "Sita's reforms brought prosperity to Mithila, reflecting her visionary leadership and commitment to justice." (Tripathi 156).

The impact on society is demonstrated by this theme of moral leadership.

Responsibility and Dharma

One recurrent theme in the book is how important the idea of responsibility or dharma is. Sita is frequently motivated by her feeling of obligation, first to her people and then to fulfil her part in the greater scheme of things. "Duty is the path to true fulfilment, and one must embrace it with all their heart" (Tripathi 210).

The significance of obligations in attaining social and personal harmony is emphasized by this theme.

Fortitude in the Face of Adversity

Sita's growth as a person is closely linked to the leitmotif of fortitude in the face of hardship. This idea is emphasized by her ability to bounce back from hardship. This declaration of strength supports the idea that true power comes from grit and persistence. "Even in the face of insurmountable odds, Sita stood tall, her spirit unyielding, a beacon of hope for all who followed her" (Tripathi 232).

Symbols**The Arrow and Bow**

Sita's power and warrior spirit have been symbolized by the bow and arrow. Sita's mastery of archery, as described by Tripathi, becomes a metaphor for her inner fortitude and readiness to defend her people. "With her bow in hand, Sita was a force to be reckoned with, her skills in archery surpassing many seasoned warriors" (Tripathi 120).

Here, the symbolism is crucial because it transforms Sita from a passive figure into an active defender

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of justice through the use of her bow and arrow.

The Mithila Ring

Sita's foster father Janaka gave her Mithila's ring, which represents her ties to her native country and the obligations that go along with it. "The ring of Mithila, a symbol of her lineage and the trust placed in her, weighed heavy on her finger and her heart" (Tripathi 95) is one of the many reminders throughout this novel of the responsibilities and legacy she is born to shoulder.

In other words, it can be considered a symbol of the fundamental responsibility and weight of leadership.

The Woods

However, the forest is a place of refuge and hardship for Sita. She develops her abilities and gets over a number of obstacles during the course, which represents growth and change, all while being protected by the forest. "The forest, with its canopy dense and hidden dangers, was her sanctuary and crucible" (Tripathi 148).

Within the intricacies of Sita's journey, this dual symbolism resonates.

Analysis by Comparison

Literature and Mythology in Context

One learns that, similar to Margaret Atwood's *The Penelopiad*, which gives voice to Penelope's perspective in *The Odyssey*, Tripathi has rewritten her story to highlight Sita's strength and agency when comparing the themes and symbolism in *Sita: Warrior of Mithila* with other mythological and literary works that reimagine traditional narratives. "Many modern retellings use symbolism and thematic depth as a way of giving new meaning to classical tales" (56).

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Amish Tripathi has completely recreated the mythological character Sita in his book *Sita: Warrior of Mithila*. Previously a virtuous deity, Sita now manifests as an entrepreneurial warrior and proactive leader. This fresh vision echoes the conventional stories about Sita told by Tulsidas in his *Ramcharitmanas* and by Valmiki in his *Ramayana*, which highlight her eternal strength, selflessness, and loyalty. Feminist ideas are upheld by highlighting Sita's strength, cunning, and unwavering independence. By highlighting Sita's power, initiative, and autonomy, Tripathi was able to creatively reinterpret her persona while challenging the patriarchal conventions that typically viewed women as submissive.

In Sita: *Warrior of Mithila*, Sita embodies the empowering ideas of independence and possesses enormous abilities for overcoming or defying expectations. She is a timeless example of female strength that is still relevant to audiences today because of the story's dramatic change in her role as a leader and warrior. In addition to redefining Sita's persona, Tripathi challenges patriarchal

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conventions that have traditionally restricted women to submissive positions by examining her strength, leadership, and agency. Sita's journey in *Sita: Warrior of Mithila* exemplifies the values of empowerment and independence by demonstrating her capacity to negotiate and challenge social norms. Her representation as a leader and warrior is a dramatic change in the story and provides a contemporary audience with an example of female empowerment.

The development of Sita's literary persona is further highlighted by a comparison with other contemporary retellings, such as Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Forest of Enchantments*. These modern renditions highlight her moral bravery, tenacity, and inner power, adding to a larger conversation about gender roles and the reworking of mythological characters.

This study emphasizes how crucial it is to reinterpret classic stories in order to address contemporary social challenges and reflect changing society attitudes. Tripathi's portrayal of Sita as a feminist symbol not only pays tribute to her heritage but also encourages a contemporary rethinking of mythological figures. In the end, *Sita: Warrior of Mithila* shows how mythological retellings can be transforming, providing fresh perspectives and strong portrayals that test and deepen our comprehension of classic tales.

Findings

Numerous very important aspects of Sita's personality as depicted by Tripathi are revealed by the investigation. She is a formidable warrior, as evidenced by her powerful body and proficiency in martial arts. Her leadership skills and strategic acumen demonstrate her knowledge and aptitude to rule. She is shown as a multifaceted and dynamic figure at the same time, with moral courage and endurance running through her like a continuous thread. Together, these attributes reinterpret Sita as a strong leader who inspires authority and respect while also being a powerful individual for her own reasons.

Novel Aspects of Sita as a Feminist Figure

Tripathi gives Sita additional facets that are entirely consistent with contemporary feminist principles. Tripathi's Sita is presented as an active agent who shapes her destiny, in contrast to earlier conventional retellings. Her claim that "she had seen too many men who were afraid of powerful women" demonstrates her rejection of patriarchal conventions. Instead of viewing them as equals, they perceived them as a threat (Tripathi 87).

Her insistence on independence and self-sufficiency, along with her strategic leadership role, represents significant deviations from the way women are often portrayed. Sita is positioned at the forefront of women's equality, autonomy, and empowerment in this new rendition.

Teachings from Sita in "Sita: Mithila's Warrior"

Sita has a lot to teach us about qualities like fortitude, self-reliance, and perseverance. Her life provides countless examples of independent living and the courage to escape social constraints. Sita is also a role model for strategic thinking and leadership, having used the brains behind the brawn to

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succeed where others failed. Her moral fortitude and tenacity serve as timeless examples for anybody fighting for justice and protecting those they care about.

The projecting power of mythological narratives is how this research works; that is, by reimagining classic tales, writers like Tripathi create fresh, empowering portrayals that could resonate with audiences in our day and age. Sita's transformation from the embodiment of passivity to a strong and independent woman reflects the shifting values of society and highlights the relevance of feminist principles in modern narrative. In the conclusion, Sita: Warrior of Mithila not only fulfils its obligation to Sita's past but also reframes her as a feminist icon with the courage and authority to rethink gender roles in the coming generation.

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