Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's the Forest of Enchantments: A Chronicle of Commitment, Disloyalty, Probity and Glory

Monika Duggal, Research Scholar, Department of English, Shobhit University, Meerut. Email:

monikaduggal0@gmail.com

Corresponding Author: Prof. (Dr) Gunjan Agarwal, Dean, School of Liberal Arts & Languages,

Shobhit University, Gangoh. Email: gunjan.agarwal@shobhituniversity.ac.in

Abstract:

Sita has been stereotyped as an idol lady and a silent victim in Indian mythology, yet she has never been recognised as a woman of unstoppable power."Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's The Forest of Enchantments" tells the epic Ramayana through the eyes of Sita, one of Indian literature's most famous female characters. The poem emphasises on Sita's spiritual being as well as her identity as a woman through a plethora of references to her.Sita is not merely a character in the narrative; she is also a powerful concept of freedom and a lady who bestows the characteristic of courage. Sita explored the new existence of muliebrity by changing her ductile image into a symbol of emancipation as part of her self-discovery process. This work is also worth studying since it examines Sita's enormous courage and humanises her trip through the unknown and scary forest. The purpose of this research is to look into Sita's relationship with nature, as the forest is an important source of empowerment in this story.Sita finds courage in her exile in the wilderness and her terrible camaraderie.Sita challenges and criticises the black-and-white distinction between right and wrong, stating that perspective is a differentiator. The purpose of this paper is to look into "Sita's relationship with the environment in the same way that the cultural ecofeminist current that dominated at the time justified women's interest in environmental preservation or well-being in terms of their inherent caring or nurturing nature and their common subjugation to patriarchal systems justified women's interest in environmental preservation or well-being".To battle patriarchal society, the author provides her with powerful weapons such as a "quill" and "questioning." She consistently challenged the norms and convictions of traditional society by destroying the image of a feeble mind and a docile lady.As a result, this is timely research because it tries to investigate Sita's agency throughout the story's various stages.As we all know, the literary scene in the twenty-first century is fuelled by experimentation with new and diverse genres including speculative or dystopian fiction, fan fiction, and revisiting mythologies through retellings of epics and fairy tales.

The Ramayana, for example, delves much deeper into the ambiguous role of women in Indian society. Women's personalities have always been shown as evasive and idealistic, but never as the embodiment of bravery. The Forest of Enchantment is an excellent work in which the identities of figures from ancient Indian mythology are rebuilt. The author incorporates "human emotions" and "human shortcomings" into Sita's persona to enlighten contemporary women.The Forest of Enchantments (2019) "is a reworking of the Ramayana, a much-discussed and studied Hindu epic, told in Sita's own voice".Sita has been depicted as a woman at the centre, with numerous protesting questions, and these questions have characterised her as a female antagonist. When Sage Valmiki discovers she is dissatisfied with his version of the Ramayana, he tells her she must write her own story. The unseen words of Ramayana rang in sorrow as she dipped her pen into the inkpot "It's also a part of our story. For as long as I can remember, we've been pushed to the margins, trivialised,misunderstood, blamed, forgotten—or ridiculed and exploited as cautionary stories." As a result, she committed to put the finest possible light to each woman's character. In the novel, the author has attempted to change Sita's archetypal image. More emphasis is placed on how a woman should fight up for her dignity and raise questions about patriarchy's follies through her character.

Sita's perspective on her exile to the jungle is not discussed throughout the epic, despite the fact that she is one of the wealthier characters in the Ramayana. As a result of Sita's retelling, Divakurani encourages her: "Write our narrative too. For as long as we can remember, we've been shoved into corners, trivialised, misunderstood, blamed, forgotten—or ridiculed and exploited as cautionary stories."(Divakaruni, 2019, p. 4).

The Forest of Enchantments (2019) explores"the themes of women's struggle, honour, and feeling of obligation to self and society, all of which are still very much alive and strong in today's world".

In The Forest of Enchantments, Sita recounts her story in her own words (2019). She discusses her joys, sorrows, and endurance, as well as her feelings towards love.Sita's journey from earth to heaven and back is also depicted in the story, as is her love for and connection to the nature and wildlife. This picture depicts Sita's ability to heal both nature and herself. As a result of their misogyny, great warriors exploited both nature and women, according to the story.The tension between civilization, nature, man, and woman is explored in this book, as well as the relationship between women's exploitation and nature. Furthermore, the poem emphasises not just on Sita's spiritual existence but also on her identity as a woman through a plethora of Sitas. The purpose of this thesis is to investigate Sita's relationship with nature, as the forest is an important source of

empowerment in this story. Sita finds solace in her harrowing unity and exile in the wilderness. In understanding that everyone has their own dharma revelations, it gives Sita a voice, wisdom, and agency. Sita argues and criticises the sharp distinction between good and evil, reminding out that different people have different perceptions.

The paper will look into Sita's relationship with the environment, following in the footsteps of the ecofeminist spirituality movement, which justified women's interest in environmental preservation or well-being by pointing to their innate caring or nurturing natures and patriarchal institutions in common.It also aims to look into a woman's relationship with nature as a source of power,as well as "how Sita's relationship with the environment allows her to speak for all of the other women in the Ramayana, including those who are outcasts and persecuted, resulting in a more modern and liberal portrayal of women in Indian mythology". As a result, this research is topical since it attempts to analyse Sita's agency at various stages throughout her life.

We are once again confronted with twentieth-century spiritual psychologists who considered the hunt for myths as a critical component of finding meaning in life. In this pursuit, Divakaruni is an outstanding writer; she delves into myths to unearth the numerous hidden and overlooked truths that provide a wealth of perspectives and meaning to life. In recent history, the policy of deliberately manufacturing myths in order to affect modern culture has been adopted repeatedly. For example, Romantic poets such as Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman aspired to create a unique myth for America's fledgling nation (Feldman & Richardson, 1682), whereas fascists such as Benito Mussolini and Alfred Rosenberg promoted the usage of mythical elements. As stated by Arvidsson (1999),

Myths were, in fact, poetic exegesis of natural and behavioural laws: allegoric interpretation. Alternatively, myths could be euhemeristic interpretations of faulty historical facts in which the heroes were attributed divinity. In all situations, the interpretation indicated that a concealed, twisted truth might be found behind the myths' apparent juvenile folly(Arvidsson, 1999, p. 329).

When a rigorous and scientific worldview strips life of its spirituality, purpose, and grandeur, myth can help to relieve the routine by stimulating the imagination. ancient knowledge to the masses However, mythology was first recognised as a lifeaffirming genre within popular romanticism in the early nineteenth century, and therefore contrasted the word's daily connotation as a false fiction. As a result, true life is only possible when myth triumphs over symbols. In a similar vein, Vayu Naidu (2012) claims that repeating mythology produces cultural memory by using "memory as a metaphor for remembering a dismembered story because it is given to us infrequently and in pieces,

and for experiencing culture through its epic figures" (Naidu, 2012, p. 170).Sita continues to confront and question our perceptions about her journey and personality in many contemporary stories. On Sita, Naidu (2012) claims,

For many women, Sita is more of a birth right and a legacy than a burden. It was eye-opening to connect with the idea of Sita being deported and adopted—both physically and metaphorically—by the country sanctioned as "marriage" while considering Sita and her tale.Despite being an orphan and an exile in circumstances she didn't choose, Sita possesses resourcefulness, bravery, joy, and an ocean of love (Naidu, 2012, p. 182).

The country is "based on the citizens of Mithila's age-old belief that no woman is powerful enough—or intelligent enough—to rule them" (Divakaruni, 2019, p. 14). "Sita's condition, on the other hand, is not typical of a princess, and even Shiva's Haradhanu, a sacred bow bestowed to protect Sita, warns her of that I [Sita] was no ordinary person, but one with a convoluted destiny. It [the bow] implied that my enormous sacrifice will redeem the world" (Divakaruni, 2019, p. 27).

"Valmiki's Ramayana tends to affirm the principles of the social order of his day, therefore helping to perpetuate institutionalised power," Paula Richman (2008) writes. (Richman, p. 9). Similarly, according to Bose and Bose (2013), the various versions of the Ramayana "focused on the exaltation of Rama and his conquering arms." They go on to say that "sympathy for Sita pervades these mournful narratives, which are often short and focused on domestic relationships rather than heroic deeds," and that "sympathy for Sita pervades these mournful narratives, which are often short and focused on domestic relationships rather than heroic deeds" (Bose, 2012, p. 4).

"The Forest of Enchantments (2019)" depicts Sita's unusual upbringing, in which she is seen as different from the other Mithila princesses. "I sense that your future would be different from most princesses," her mother predicted (Divakaruni, 2019, p. 9). Sita is a rebellious princess who uses her wits and sharp tongue to defy convention. Sita, for example, shows Ram that she is more than a girl in a Swayamvara.Her rashness compelled her to speak up. "But deep inside me someone-was it the goddess? - whispered, it's necessary to speak your thoughts to the man you're going to marry," she writes, echoing her mother's forceful personality. If you couldn't do that, what type of relationship would you have?" (Divakaruni, p. 36, 2019). Sita's unusual attributes, on the other hand, aren't "the ones society appreciates most in a woman" (Divakaruni, 2019, p. 46).

Ecofeminism is a subset of feminism that considers environmental issues and the relationship between women and the earth to be central to its philosophy and practise. Ecofeminist scholars use the concept of gender to examine the human-natural world relationship (Mac Gregor &Sherlilyn,

2004). Françoise d'Eaubonne, a French feminist, is frequently credited with coining the term ecofeminism (1974). However, other ecologists (Gaard 1998; Salleh 1991) suggest that "ecofeminism" as a concept arose in the 1970s as a reaction to a variety of development initiatives. According to Val Plumwood (1996), the beginnings of ecofeminism thought can be found in previous feminists:

"It takes the drive to fully integrate women as part of human culture from early and liberal feminism, and it draws a knowledge of the processes and structures of power and dominance from socialist feminism. It draws the critique of dominant culture's masculinity and the desire to replace it, affirming what has been denigrated, from radical feminism" (Plumwood, 1996, p. 13).

Karen Warren published an ecofeminism-themed edition of Hypatia in 1991, which was expanded and reprinted as Ecofeminist Philosophy later that year. Warren has brought together a varied spectrum of perspectives, not all of whom are ecofeminists, but all of whom share a shared awareness of the reality of ecofeminism on the ground. Inadequate theoretical underpinnings do not deter activists, Conservative legislators have used a lack of a thorough theoretical account to obstruct change implementation. Warren's ecofeminist theory serves as a theoretical and analytical framework for their current work. Her work also brings soldiers together and strengthens their ability to combine aims and arguments, eroding and combating the global image of powerful extremist activists idolised in today's media. As a result, it has the same global social vision as them and is based on ecofeminist spiritualism.

Spirituality is linked to power, particularly the ability to shift from "unhealthy, life-denying systems and relationships to healthy, life-affirming" (Warren, 2000, p. 200) ones, and without resorting to violence, it offers a space for inner strength and empowerment. Ecofeminist spirituality, Warren asserted in 1993, provides a space for women and nature to heal the wounds that patriarchy had inflicted. She goes on to say that ecofeminist spirituality is a weapon for surviving and conquering patriarchy because it has the ability to "intervene with and creatively modify patriarchal (and other) oppressive institutions" in 2000. (Warren 2000, p. 195).

This paradigm is undeniably criticised and refuted by other feminists, such "Simone de Beauvoir, who claims that the link of women and nature is a new attempt to pin women back to their traditional function" (de Beauvoir 1984, p. 103). To this end, Warren claims that spirituality should not be reduced to a demeaning mind/emotion dichotomy, but rather as a means of demonstrating that emotions may be inferred and have strong links to legitimate beliefs. As a result, in Ecofeminist Philosophy, she invented the term "emotional intelligence," which is an element of Warren's

cautious ethic, which is based on its ability to care rather than being transcendent. In order to explain her ethics, Warren (2000) uses an analogy."It is not that one fruit is better than the others in some abstract sense," says one ethical concept. It's just that, depending on the conditions, one fruit (or multiple fruits) may be preferable to others" (Warren, 2000, p. 108). Ecofeminist spiritualities promote a sense of "daring to care" (Warren, 2000, p. 212), which is necessary for care-sensitive ethics to take root.As a result, eco-feminist spirituality may be "often plainly earth-based" (Warren, 2000, p. 130), but this does not promote women's harmful identity with nature; rather, it reminds us that the division between "human" and "nature" is a false dichotomy. As a result, spirituality does not serve to lock the woman into the role of caretaker; rather, it promises a conceptual framework that includes men, rather than restricting the woman to nature.

Sita is honoured in the Ramayana for her devotion to her dharma (obligation) as a wife and mother, as well as the sacrifices she took to attain it. She is seen as a symbol of femininity and a role model for other women to aspire to. Sita is generally seen as an extension of Lord Ram, rather than an aspired individual with vision, despite being a Goddess herself, the incarnation of Goddess Lakshmi. Sita is known for her tenacity. It is frequently associated with submissiveness, giving, and tenderness, and is used to illustrate how girls in Indian culture are socialised.The manifestation of righteous conservatism is a woman's commitment to her husband, regardless of circumstances. Divakurani retains Sita's primary character in The Forest of Enchantments (2019), which is her ability to withstand incomprehensible and uncountable anguish. The concept of endurance, on the other hand, is not associated with weakness in this literature, but with power. Sita has visions of "*Sunaina, Ahalya, Mandodari, Sarama, Kalkeyi, Tara, and even Surpanakha*", who tells her to persevere, as she is contemplating in the forest.They advise Sita to persevere as we do in the dream. 'Thrive in the face of adversity" (Divakaruni, 2019, p. 322). "It meant facing the obstacles placed at us and dealing with them as intelligently as we knew until we got stronger than them," Sita explains as she ponders the true meaning of the word "endurance" (Divakaruni, 2019, p. 322).

As a result, the poem instils a new sense of empowerment in women through endurance, motivating them to overcome hurdles and succeed. Another pivotal scene in the story supports this theory: Sita's decision to join Ram to the wilderness. "What stupidity is this?" Ram retorts, denigrating her ability as a woman. You're not going to be able to join me. "You're a lady" (Divakaruni, 2019, p. 111). Sita keeps quiet, although she wished to refute Ram's assertion that "not all women are weak and powerless like you think." You never know, I might come in handy" (Divakaruni, 2019, p. 111). We get to see Ahalya's mute pain from a different perspective than Divakaruni's Sita in the wilderness.Ahalya is turned to stone by her spouse due to no fault of her own.Ram saves Ahalya,

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and she has sworn "a vow of silence," according to Sage Gautam (Divakaruni 131). Sita asks Ahalya a question because she is bewildered by the injustice that has reigned in the circumstance, and Ahalya responds:

As I lay stone-bound, I tortured myself with these ideas. Yes, it was part of the curse—that I should be able to experience every second of my imprisonment... Do you not be burned if you put your hand in a fire, whether consciously or unknowingly? The universe's old law states as much. The fruit of karma. It is unconcerned with the concept of motive (Divakaruni, 2019, p. 134).

"Sita is surprised by Ahalya's remark, because she has always believed that motive was more important than action, even more so than destiny" (Divakaruni, 2019, p. 134). Sita's prophecy about Ahalya's penance allows her to see things in a different light, as Ahalya's vow of quiet reminds her that Gautam is being punished for his actions. Sita's prophecy tells her that "love can't be totally repaired once mistrust has gravely injured it" (Divakaruni, 2019, 136), foreshadowing her own tragedy later in the story.

Sita's relationship with nature is also shown in great depth in this tale. While the Ramayana connects Sita to nature, Divakurani focuses on the specific features and ideas that predominate in Sita's relationship with nature and everything that it contains. Two examples of her determination and self-reliance can be used to explain this.When she is called upon to prove her chastity for the second time, she decides to live in the woods, renouncing her rich life as a princess, and joins Mother Earth of her own free choosing.This demonstrates that she is empowered by nature since she sees the forest as "healing green canopies" (Divakaruni, 2019, p. 352). "I'm Sita, the woodland inhabitant, Sita, the earth's daughter," Sita declares. Sita, too, is a fire-daughter" (Divakaruni, 2019, p. 352).

Sita's connection to the forest "show faith in a life-affirming power of presence (i.e. energy, force, being, deity or deities, God or Goddess)," according to ecofeminist spiritualities (Warren, 2000, p. 198). Sita has had a strong attraction to the forest since she was a child. "Because what beckoned to me the most intensely were the woodlands that I could see from the royal turrets," she remembers. No one in my family shared my enthusiasm for trees" (Divakaruni, 2019, pp. 7-8). "My odd gift with plants was a mystery to me," Sita claims. Maybe it was because I was born on this planet, just like them. Perhaps I sensed a plant's therapeutic powers when I touched it for some reason" (Divakaruni, 2019, p. 7)."We rarely see her in the protected interiors of palaces for long; wilderness and abandon are where she prevails," says Naidu (2012). (Naidu, 2012, p. 174). "Perhaps I'd be able to think more clearly amid its gorgeous trees," Sita speculates (Divakaruni, 2019, p. 321).

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In The Forest of Enchantment, Sita is a metaphorical depiction of nature (2019). Her father, king Janaka, is reported to have discovered her while ploughing the earth, and she was born from Earth. The following is a description of her childhood:

"My odd ability to communicate with plants was a mystery to me. Perhaps it was because I, too, was born on this planet. Perhaps for the same way, I understood a plant's healing powers as I touched it....." (Divakaruni, p. 7)

The people of her country referred to her as a "Goddess" because of her ability to cure many people using her knowledge of the therapeutic virtues of her herbs. She was enamoured with the forest and the people who lived there since she was a child. She wanted to go to the wilderness, but "women didn't do it" (Divakaruni, 2019, p. 8).

Sita is depicted as someone who understands how males dominate, mistreat, and use women and the environment for their own benefit and in the name of civilization progress to further illustrate that Divakurani's Sita is an incarnation of ecofeminist spirituality."They [citizens of Ayodhya] named me, food provider, queen of flowers, removers of grief," she claims, referring to herself as the reincarnation of Lakshmi (Divakaruni, 2019, p. 288)."The callous behaviour of the soldiers was the only thing that bothered me [Sita]." Is it possible for him [Ram] to issue an order that they do not injure the trees? ... In surprise, Ram's brows furrowed. He'd obviously never considered that plants experience pain in the same way that humans do" (Divakaruni, 2019, p. 56). "You have a soft heart, my love," Ram responds. That is something I admire. It is both appropriate and important for women to be in this position" (Divakaruni, 2019, p. 56). "Wasn't he also responsible for the animals, birds, and trees in his kingdom, as well as the people?" Sita couldn't understand (Divakaruni, 2019, p. 56).

Sita found it easy to make herself at home during her exile and reconnected with nature. She insists on the following:

"I observed spectacular sunsets and molten-silver moonrises in Panchabati, which extended across the sky like a smile. From behind layers of cloud, I saw stars glinting like bashful eyes. I was struck with wonder when I saw birds and monsters that were multi-hued and multi-pelted, so unlike anything I'd seen before. Plants in this area were especially sensitive to my presence. When I watered them or disturbed the ground around their roots, the stinging thorns pulled in and the bush burst into flower."(Divakaruni, 2019, p. 137).

"My favourite task [as Queen of Ayodhya], the garden palace...The entire side of the grounds that ran back the palace I'd turned into a tiny forest," Sita continues (Divakaruni, 2019, p. 303). "But certain days a peculiar restlessness would come over me, a need to go walking in a real forest, a wild, unpredictable forest, the kind that had been my home for so many years," she writes, despite the fact that she transforms her garden into a "small forest" (Divakaruni, 2019, p. 303).

Sita's close relationship with the forest and the people who live there reveals that, contrary to popular belief, the jungle is not a dark and mysterious place for her. She feels most powerful and energetic here, in fact.

During Ram and Lakshman's voyage to exile, Sita's fight to safeguard and treat nature and its inhabitants equally to humans can be witnessed. The brothers believe that the wildness should be tamed and brought under control, despite the fact that it is they who are invading the forest inhabitants' area, just like modernization and deforestation do today.For example, a sage tells the brothers in one chapter of the story that their ultimate reason for being exiled is "......maybe that's why destiny took you to the forest; Gautam was saying." To finally be free of them. To put an end to their heinous practises. To disseminate civilization's light. You must guarantee me that you would do your utmost to achieve that." (Divakaruni, 2019; p.135).

A recurrent problem in our social structure, whether it was then or now, is the failure to recognise that every living thing has the right to survive and develop in its own location.The forest and its inhabitants are subjected to the patriarchal authority's unceasing drive to rule others' areas. The patriarchy can infiltrate the forest under the guise of need, hunting, and even civilization because of its desire to conquer the forest's riches.

The uncivilised treatment of Surpanakha is another illustration of Ram and Lakshman's apathetic attitude toward the various inhabitants. Surpanakha's background and past are lost on Ram and Lakshman, who, more importantly, fail to view her as a lady who simply offers love. Both men might have handled the incident properly and without putting the woman in a humiliating position.

The girl had defied maidenly conventions by presenting herself to a man she had never met, but perhaps the asuras had their own set of laws.... Before things got any worse, I motioned to her behind Ram's back to depart with dignity. (P. 148, Divakaruni, 2019)

She was taken aback that someone could treat her this way after all she had given him was love (Divakaruni, p. 149, 2019).

Ram and Lakshman dismiss Sita's concerns, arguing that Rakshashas are a threat to mankind and that it is their obligation to eliminate them whenever they are encountered. 'In reality, Lakshman was kind to this one, sparing her life since she was a child,' Ram said, explaining Lakshman's conduct(P. 151) Divakaruni, 2019.

Sita believes Surpanakha is being unfairly handled, and when her husband defends the deed as a humanitarian effort, she says that the sages, in particular, want peace and safety:

"Nothing else came out of my mouth. The men were not going to modify their minds, I could tell. Their faith in their own superiority in their own methods was excessive. I, on the other hand, felt dissatisfied. We were visitors in a forest with its own set of rules, rhythm, and wild beauty. It belonged to the Rakhshasas more than it did to us. What gave us the right to wreak havoc on those who had inhabited this land long before us?" (Divakaruni,p.151-152, 2019).

Sita seeks to not just save the environment, but also to take power, comfort, and love from it throughout the story. Nature calms her like a mother would a child when she is kidnapped by Ravan.Flora and animals share her grief and suffering. "....I could feel their sympathy for me when I touched them." My touch could heal them if they were willing. As a result, we learned to love one another. The Asoka tree, under which I slept, was extremely special to me..." (Divakaruni, p. 187, 2019)."When Sita is exiled to the forest for the third time, nature provides her with a renewed sense of strength and authority, allowing her to nurture and raise her sons to be good human beings, as opposed to their cruel father". Sita declares the following:

"I am willing to lay down my life for you [her children]. With my last breath, I'll defend you. I'll love you enough for both your mother and father, so you don't feel deprived. I'm going to teach you all you need to know about being kind so you'll never treat a female the way your father did"(Divakaruni, 2019, p. 317).

Ram tells Sita that she must pass the Yajna fire test to prove her innocence and purity, and that she must return to Ayodhya. Despite her love for her spouse, Sita feels such training to be humiliating. When her children, Lav and Kush, sing Sita's Sitayan instead of Valmiki's Ramayana, they are aware of their mother's grief.

"They're singing the pages I composed in my lonely darkness in order to give everyone who has been silenced a voice. People have been deceived and mistakes have been made. My reality, as well as the truths of the women whose lives had an impact on mine, for better or worse. Their lives were shaped by their pleasures and sufferings, victories and tragedies, blessings and curses." (Divakaruni, 2019, p. 354).

Sita, unable to tolerate such humiliation, contends that: Because some sorts of burning do not involve the use of fire, my rage rises until my entire body is burned. He hasn't shown any feelings of love or expressed regret for the agony he has caused me. He didn't mention anything about how he treated me unfairly and cruelly when he sent me away. Ram hasn't even used my first name when addressing me(Divakaruni, 2019, p. 355).

"Sita refuses to be humiliated in this manner, and she turns down Ram's and her children's offers to live in Ayodhya. She asserts that:

Because if I do what you want, society will criticise other women for the rest of my life based on my behaviour. Even if they are not guilty, they will be responsible for proving their innocence. Why not, society will say? It was even read by Queen Sita." (Divakaruni, 2019, pp. 356-357).

"I [Sita] enlist the assistance of my mother earth and father fire, both of whom have shaped me into the woman I am today. O Mother, O Father, I've been falsely accused and have struggled and endured all my life. Give me a sign if I'm not to fault for the rumours that circulated" (Divakaruni, 2019, p. 357).

Sita's search for peace in Mother Earth as her ultimate refuge reveals her fury at the continual betrayal and rejection she has experienced throughout her life. "A great energy" surges through Sita's body as she speaks, and "the earth erupts in a deafening roar" (Divakaruni, 2019, p. 357). Sita is reverting to her old state as a woman. Though this deed is sometimes seen as Mother Earth's protection of her daughter, the irony of the circumstance is never lost, since it may just as well be interpreted as being buried alive from another perspective. As "Nabaneeta Dev Sen" points out, Sita's suicide is akin to women who choose to end their lives as a result of physical violence (Sen,2018, pp. 24-25). Velcheru Narayana Rao (2004) emphasises the related experience of empowerment and opposition that is visible in Sita's decision in his dissertation "When does Sita Cease to be Sita?"

She has shown her chastity as well as her independence by returning to the ground. It's a strong criticism of a culture that distrusts women as well as an assertion of her own honesty. It's tough not to read this as Sita protesting her people's and husband's treatment of her (Bose, 2004, p. 226)

Sita's final act of defiance of subjugation will definitely strengthen her and other future women who must fiercely fight such treatment. Sita understands it is time for self-actualization at this point and decides to immediately cease her others' influence over her own life. It also leads to a personal voyage of self-discovery for a woman who has become embroiled in radical and rebellious behaviour as a result of her husband's and society's indifference. Furthermore, Sita reveals, in this

ultimate act of bravery and power, that she is far from weak and submissive, as has been described in Vedic literature for centuries.

Chitra Banerjee's 2019 novel The Forest of Enchantments Divakaruni lends a voice to the Ramayana's misunderstood, undervalued, and marginalised women. This emphasises the importance of analysing and paying attention to fiction, especially mythological reinterpretations. The hero is typically positioned above others in mythology, including men, women, and the environment, due to his position and power; he is superior and divine. Divakaruni's novel changes the attention away from a one-sided and blinded perspective and onto people, women, and nature."Sita constantly rewires and challenges the boundaries of cultural and moral traditions in Sitayan". Sita's many characteristics as a strong woman, as seen at various stages throughout the story. Divakurani's attempt to alter the narration voice to Sita opens up a wealth of new options and views, as well as a shift away from myth and epic fiction and toward realist and satirical fiction.Sita's departure from the confining setting that has silenced her voice and personality in favour of a wonderful woodland trek, a place of chance and freedom, eventually allows her to express her thoughts. This is a start in the right direction, a test that will help you improve as a person. In Divakurani's The Forest of Enchantments, Sita establishes herself as an equal in patriarchal culture by speaking up against injustice throughout her life (2019).

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