

# A Discourse of Integrative Fabric of Sita and Characteristics of Indian Women

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## Abstract

The iconic global woman, the Indian representative of cultural integration and patience, Sita has been explored in a new dimension in this study. The process of social development has been greatly affected owing to the discriminatory treatment applied to ladies nearly in each sphere of life. Sita's motherly affection, simplicity, and love for all have inspired millions of people across generations in this country. This research is an attempt to investigate the integrative nature of Sita's love, affection, and bonding with patience, and how she continues to inspire Indian women. This research explores those characteristics and features that are a part of Indian women. This research explains the behaviour of Indian women and disseminates the problems of gender bias. This study firmly concludes that she would continue to integrate and fabricate Indian culture and ethos with her sublime qualities and character, which will continue to be reflected in Indian women of the future.

**Keywords:** culture and characteristics, patience, love and affection, Sita, and global icon of India

## 1. Introduction

Women have played an integrative role in stitching the threads of culture, religion, customs, and family with values, principles, and morale since time immemorial. She is the custodian and guardian of family and national pride of honour. In her, we could also see representations of love, affection, care, forgiveness with a motherly state. All these noble principles which are followed in the customs and day-to-day practices have found their place among the godly virtues. All these virtues are holy and women are holy by nature, principle, and in living (Pandeewari, Hariharasudan, & Kot, 2021). The path for transformation lies in simplistic life with a strong cultural foundation with love and affection towards family and children and leading a selfless, sacrificing life for Indian society. These simplistic women have transformed and integrated the Indian identity and representations to the world. One such noble and humble with simple living is Sita, wife of Rama who became a legend along with her & he would have never known to have existed "without Sita (Goodman, 1996). She is gentler in thinking, yet clear and focused, transformative and futuristic in her intentions which guided Rama to be an able administrator and nobler in thinking.

King Janaka the father of Sita is known in history and representations, but the silent administrator and leader of Mithila, Mother of Sita, Sunaina is lesser-known and heard of. She was an effective financial administrator, intelligent, and had decision-making skills as she had been the woman in the role, less represented. King Janaka had discovered Sita from the earth, but her nobility, character, and deed were shaped, refined, and integrated by Sunaina. She had taught her tougher administrative skills, the ability to lead a country, and to have a personal network for professional and personal life (Sharma, 2002). All these skills helped Sita in her later part of the challenge in the forest with Rama – Jatayu and Hanuman who were on a rescue mission for her were her childhood friends. She learned philosophy, art, religion, and culture in her brief stay of learning in Ashram of Mithila where Saint Vishwamitra visited often. He had a lot of admiration indeed for the capabilities and skills of Sita, who was a pragmatic person with logical skills. Financial & family management along with the country, was an easy task for her.

Parallel processing skills were evident in Indian women who lived in her times with her, the culture, civilization, and moral behaviour were inscribed with Indian women (Hariharasudan & Pandeewari, 2020). She is a true representation of ideal women in Indian society, who live silently and quietly as their actions speak. Such is the impact of Sita on Indian women. Indian culture and heritage were given their dimension and shape with Sita which flourished and continued after her. Millions of admirers follow Sita for nobility, divinity, and character which has become a part of Indian women and their DNA.

This paper is an exploration into the character of Sita which has become embedded and effectively integrated with the character and nature of Indian women, due to the nurturing of culture, values, and practices by Sita. The silent transition of Indian women and their nature and behaviour by following Sita would be explored in this paper. The contributions of Sita on Indian women's psyche, behavior, and character would be discussed in detail in this paper.

This paper would be conceptual as it intends to assimilate and produce the unique fabric of Sita and her characteristic identity, which is prevalent in Indian women. Sita has provided intellectual boundaries, moral values, and cultural integration, which has led Indian women to have well-defined social paths for family progress and national development. She has emphasized socio-economic contributions, which we could see as a reflection in modern Indian women today. The study would focus on the integrative fabric contributions of Sita and her reflection on Indian women and their identities. If there was no Sita, no integrative cultural families could have lived in India, which has been ignored by Ignorant Valmiki, a less mortal.

Rama has led an integrative and pious life due to Sita and her feminine nature of sublimity, humility, and obedience with a sacrifice of self for the welfare of others (Luis, 2002). Still, we could find that these nobility principles provide energy for the entire country to move on. Sita's nature and principles have been reflected in Indian culture, art, and dance and in the guiding spiritual tradition of Indian women who found her as national pride and glory to be associated. Tolerance, love, and affection to all are attributed to Sita, who had provided patience to Indian women, which we could find in its reflections and representations of Buddhist texts (Axel, 2014).

A careful analysis of Indian texts during the 18th and 19th century would reveal that feministic traditions and their cultural orientations have been guided by passivism. A subdued, humbler image has been reflected in women and we could find that the traditional outlook prevailed in Sita continues in the 20th century among modern women (Mallarika, 2014).

Usha Zacharias (2001) had found that the representation of Indian women had been sublime and passive to a larger extent which is subtle. In this representation as sublimity, there is a hidden narrative for Indian women to be stronger in emphasis and decision making and managing Indian men in social relationships in an effective way. This subtle emotional intelligence is very high for Sita to manage situations and men very effectively which has been imbibed by Indian women to manage crises and challenges very effectively.

## 2. Literature Review

Desai, Santosh (2012) had described the role and contributions of Sita as legendary and unique in Indian cultural history in these words:

“The story of Sita's sufferings, her faithfulness, her second banishment in the desolate forest, and despite this, her tremendous courage and the lofty sense of honour and grace with which she faces her husband and the court at the end, are stories fed with religious zeal to every little girl in all Hindu homes. There is no character in the literature of the Hindus, or perhaps of all mankind, loftier than Sita—the embodiment of womanly love, truth, and devotion”. This is the impact of Sita on Indian culture, tradition, customs as she has had a very strong emotional connection with Indian women to date. This is the personal impact that she has held on Indian women and it's more than Rama's image even greater than Lord Narayana and his influence on the world.

With all these divine qualities, she could not control herself as Ram says that she is free to go anywhere she likes. This provocation leads Sita to create fire and prove herself. The ability to prove in a male chauvinistic society that has doubted her had made her heavenly abode easy. Virtue always pays as she reaches heaven even before the architect of heaven, Ram arrives there. Her mother's training had enabled her to face hardships with ease and elegance. Sunaina, mother of Sita discusses her problems in life as she says:

“Running away is never the solution. Confront your problems. Manage them. That is the way of the warrior. “Sunaina lifted Sita's chin and looked into her eyes.” And, you are a warrior. Don't ever forget that” (Tripathi, 2017)

The noble qualities and admiration of Sita are acknowledged by Ram, which later turns into Jealousy and which

leads to sending her alone to the forest for the second time after reaching Ayodhya:

“Ram wanted to marry a woman in front of whom he would be compelled to bow his head in admiration”. This is the acknowledgment and appreciation for Sita and it is this noble character is instilled in Indian women through Sita, that an Indian woman is acknowledged, bowed, and respected by Indian men. As she enters the flames, the flame is flamed with the glorious and divine attributes of Sita as God of fire glorifies her as he vouches for her purity and innocence in the heart (Velcheru, 2004).

“She then walked slowly through the fire. The truth of her heart made lotus blossoms spring up in the fire. The moist cool blossoms lay under her feet. Thus protected, she crossed the fire safely and emerged unharmed”. This clearly illustrates the virtues of nobility, truth, integrity, and character can never be tarnished even by flames. She is indicative to Indian women to have the nobility in thoughts, expressions, and character even though it is put to test in the hardest way. Fire is the symbol of victory for Sita as she emerges more glorified and beautiful from the flames. Flames could not touch truth, and the truth is evident that she is as ideal as God herself and glorified as God as she is the supreme mother earth that forgives and pardons her enemies. She pardons Rustic Ram and accepts her in civilian attitude and with her glorified presence makes him human. In this way, the modern Rama’s in India, are given their place of honour and respect due to the glorious Seetha’s which are prevalent in Indian homes. Sita lives not as an ideology but as a woman in every household of India, and the pride and honour of the country are saved with their glory.

The nature of men is represented in Rama with jealousy, doubt, and social fear but Sita has none of these as she has the acceptance of the situation as her greatest virtue. Sita accepts and surrenders to the situation totally which gives her victory. This is the character of Sita which has taken her to the heavenly abode and Indian women are living the life of surrender to the situation which gives greater power than to fight it. This is the one lesson men learn from Sita, as a message for men to be worth living and women who are worthy of their living. Nobility in thinking and beauty in approach are the true virtues of Sita as she is emancipated as Goddess in Indian cultural, mythological, and religious scriptures. This also reiterates the position of Sita, and her heavenly enthronement as a goddess has been taken with simplicity and humbleness. This sweet nature of Sita could be found in Indian women as they integrate the fabrics of Indian culture with simplicity and humbleness, following the graceful footsteps of Sita (Hiltebeitel & Erndl, 2000).

Sita is dutiful as she warns her husband that for asking her to take the test of virtue, he would remain unpardoned in the pages of Indian cultural and traditional history for his unpopular deed against women.

‘Will in all future time set the pattern

of vulgar, selfish, prideful,

one-sided, pitiless desecration

of supportless womankind?’ (Sitayana: Sita’s Fire, p.171)

The balance in her approach and her thinking as per the situation makes Sita legendary and this character we find in Indian women as they can manage their thinking with capabilities in the most effective way as shown by their role model – Sita. She is a living goddess and a sister in their home and the acts of grace, we still find in Indian houses as in Mithila and Ayodhya (magical vibrance of Sita and her elegant nature). Rama can identify her presence with her elegance by the sound of anklets, gracefully composed representation of Indian women.

‘Hearing the sound of bracelet-, belt-, and anklet-bells, Rama spoke

to his brother, with wonder in his heart.

Is the god of love beating his victory drums to announce his intention to conquer the world?”

The graceful and powerful presence of women is always provided effectively. This subtlety is the hallmark of Indian women in family and social situations, which has been provided by Sita. Both Rama and Sita are one single representation of the entire universe in an integrated form. The effective fabric of integration of Indian customs and practices along with husband and family is provided by Sita, the universal glory. This unity, despite differences, has been followed and praised in Indian homes, which has provided integration in Indian families (Pandeewari, Hariharasudan & Nawaz, 2021). The Ideal combination of Rama and Sita is a combination of Bhakti and Dharma which is practiced in Indian households. The combination is so effective and the paths of heavenly abode are made simpler and easier with ideal intentions yet real, with holy and sublime procedures, natural and simple and which is divinely and motherly. The holy integration of the minds of Rama and Sita has created cultural integration of minds of husbands and wives across the country.

She was a mystical child and the family upbringing has made her contribute to social, political, and religious living with humble service to her husband. This was found in Sita's early years by Janaka as he describes her:

“She was inclusive and not isolable

Creatrix, mediatrix

hermitess, enchantress, mother of love

Madonna of might and light. (Sitayana: Sita's Fire, p.175)

The father was able to see the enlightenment in Sita as he was excited. This excitement got transformed and idealized in families of Mithila and Ayodhya and became a part of Indian women's heritage which we could witness. She had the philosophical insights and knowledge at a very early age, and this training is provided by reading and interacting with learned professionals by women in India as well. Sita was able to see the subtle nuances and challenges in life and living as she expresses:

We live and die, and live and die again,

And the whole rhythm of life

Is also the dirge of decay and death

And the song of renewal' (Sitayana: Sita's Fire, p.180)

Women are bolder and stronger in these philosophical insights in India due to their mindset a product of Sita, who has provided with their wisdom on subtleties and challenges of life (Priyadharshini, Mohan, Hariharasudan, & Sangeetha, 2021). It has also provided them with a daring spirit to live and endure the challenges of life in the most effective way. She has the tremendous power to accept all the events and changes which happened with a crystal-clear mind and open approach. This also has been the strength of Indian women as they can adapt to situations more effectively than men. These mental reflections of Sita would provide the understanding of acceptance in mind to changes;

'Sita was weighted with no wants, worries,

Specific expectations:

There were no intruding distractions: and

She was ready to receive” (Sitayana: Sita's Fire, p.201)

This mental courage and reflective thinking have been the contribution of Sita which has been instilled in Indian women and their approach to life and living based on existential philosophy, which was discovered later by westerners, practiced by Indian women with her.

### *2.1 Eco feminine Philosophy of Sita – Embodiment in Indian women*

Sita was a priceless discovery from the earth and she returned to mother earth on her choice to leave this earth after finishing her duties and responsibilities. Such is her grace and she has associated herself with nature during most of her lifetime, as nature had provided mental capabilities and support to face life. The associations of nature in Sita living have been captured in these lines:

“The Ramayana symbolically represents two themes: First, the struggle between male and female for supremacy, and second the affinity of women to nature (Prakriti)...

The plant symbolism in Sita's personality and the longing of Sita for life in the forest is indicative of not just the paradisiacal view of life in the forest, but it represents a primeval feminine urge to experience free-spirited life before the onslaught of civilization.' (Lavanya, 2011). So Sita's life unfolds as a journey as a search into her identity and contributions to society upholding traditions and family customs. This real-life journey makes her realize her own identity and place in the social norms and customs. She is a role model to millions of Indians. She helps them explore and discover their self-identities and make valuable contributions to society by upholding customs and family traditions. Such is the impact of Sita on Indian women. The script has been provided by Sita, and the living has been made as a wonderful, joyous discovery of life by Indian women.

Women in India have been creative and crafty in their activities with a practical approach. Women in India are motherly as they form a part of nature as they produce life and provide sustainability to it. These transforming and contributing approaches of Indian women have been imbibed from Sita who has a very close affinity with nature and its preservations. Women are the manifestations of nature as they symbolize life in Sita life, which can also be seen

in Indian women. This character of the natural transformer of Indian customs and traditions has been given impetus by Sita, and it has effectively spread across women in this country (Aarti, 2018).

### *2.2 Sita a Powerful Leader*

Sita with her characteristics also has provided invaluable leadership lessons for Indian women as they could imbibe it in their lives and living. The marriage of Rama and Sita and their nature is provided in the following lines:

‘Sita is as powerful as the man she married, not a meek woman, by any stretch of the imagination. From the beginning of the story, then, these two events, Sita’s birth and her marriage establish her spontaneous wild nature as well as her strong and independent character’ (Lavanya, 2011).

Thus, we could find the women in India are stronger and more independent in nature and behaviour due to Sita and her legendary living only. When she was sent to the forest again for the second time, she narrates her story to nature and it was passed on to every plant, tree, and animal in the forest:

‘The forest heard Sita’s story. Her tale was passed from tree to tree, leaf to leaf. The birds flew high into the sky, promising to spread her tale across the forest. The snakes, hearing of her loss, vowed to stay free of her feet, and the lions and tigers swore to leave her in peace’ (Aarti, 2018).

But this graceful and supportive role of a lion in the forest, we do not find in Lord Ram, who controls the entire Ayodhya. It is a disgrace for men and her living reflects the challenges every woman has to endeavor in their life, and it provides women with grace and courage to face tough situations in life (Hariharasudan, 2020). After the victory of Rama over Ravana, the second exile of Sita finally a disturbed Sita requests Mother nature to take her back once for all from this world:

‘If unstained in thought and action I have lived from the day of my birth, spare a daughter’s shame and anguish and receive her, Mother Earth! If in duty and devotion, I have laboured undefiled, Mother Earth! Who bore this woman, once again receive thy child! If in truth unto my husband I have proved a faithful wife, Mother Earth! Relieve thy Sita from the burden of this life’ Thus, we could find pain and agony of life in the most precious gracious gift of Mother Nature (Malashri & Namita, 2009). Mother Nature obliges her request, and she takes her back to nature again.

## **3. Methodology**

Sita Devi is an integral part of womanhood. A woman whose contribution in setting an exemplary lifestyle amidst challenges and trials with an additive flavour of grace and dignity is magnificent. The greatness of Sita Devi is highly notable in the Indian culture, and hence this research analyses the role of Sita Devi in impacting Indian women.

### *3.1 Aim of the Study*

The study aims to evaluate the role of Sita as an integrative fabric of Indian culture and its impact on the character of Indian women

### *3.2 The Focus of the Study*

The study would focus on the role and contributions made by Sita in shaping the cultural, religious, and moral identity along with the Character of Indian women.

### *3.3 Type of Research*

This research would be analytical and descriptive.

### *3.4 Dimensions of the Study*

This study, by nature, would evaluate the contributions of Sita as an integrative fabric and its impact on Indian women from an existentialism point of view.

### *3.5 The objective of the Study*

To evaluate the role of Sita as the integrative fabric of Indian culture and traditions

To investigate the contributions of Sita as integrative fabric on the character of Indian women

## **4. Analysis and Discussion**

The study would analyze and discuss the multifaceted charm of Sita from which her exemplary contributions in the eco feminine point of view can be evaluated. The qualities and traits that have earned her dignity would be analyzed even when she was subjected to several mistreatments. The way and example she has set forth will be highlighted throughout the analysis, which can become the rallying theme for women in the contemporary world as well. Also,

analysis of the strength and endurance within her character will help to evaluate the role of Sita as an integrative fabric of Indian culture.

## 5. Conclusion

Sita was an ideal gift to Janaka and Ram, and she has been a treasure for Indian culture and traditions. This we could see in the response provided by Janaka on seeing Sita when he was ploughing the land:

“The gift of Grace abounding made the king

Melt like a mother, he gazed

At the child in rapture, and he held her

In his almost trembling hands”

The gift of the grace of Sita has swept all over the country, and it's bound to have its impact on culture, traditions, and harmony of the world. She has been the integrative fabric that could provide immediate relationships and effective association with the bonding of love and affection, motherly care, and treating everyone equally. All these characteristics in Indian women are the representations of ideal life and living to serve each other's in the family will continue as a character in them, embodied from Sita.

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