



## **Virtue and Violence: An Ecofeministic view on Ashok K.Banker's *Ramayana series***

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Indian writing in English has now started receiving the serious attention of literary historians which is a certain proof of its growth both in bulk and in quality. Not only are more books written in English still published in India but the subjects on which books are written in English are also more varied. English is not an Indian language, but it has served so many useful and essential purposes of a developing society. It is best to be admitted that English has been our language of social awareness and involvement.

Banker has won admiration for tackling, daring and complex subjects in a carefully crafted prose, he has renewed the Ramayana, the great Indian epic in Indian modern literature, He has retold the Ramayana with new incidents and idioms with fresh perspective.

The current study explores banker's construction of Ramayana tradition with Ecofeministic concern at both the ideological and formal level. Ecofeminism depicts the strange connection between women and nature and how they often become the subject of exploitation.

Indian culture has always been a male dominated that even from the age of Vedas and Upanishads, women were considered inferior.

This paper interprets the bestselling books of Ashok k. Banker to examine the ecofeminist concerns which need for feminization of thoughts and enthronement of women values. The voice of women in Banker's the Ramayana series draws an attention towards women and their position in patriarchal society. In this study the Ecofeministic quality of the text is studied by the analyses of

two female characters, Sita, the supreme model of purity, concern, loyal, love, peace and compassion.

‘By the grace of Kamadev,’

He said, his voice no longer hoarse are frail,’ you are blessed . . . with the most beautiful body and face I have beheld on any mortal woman.’ (Armies of Hanuman, 305)

The other character is Ahkila, the wife of Gautama sage who is known for her beauty, love, dedication.

In contrast to Sita’s own dusky completion and sharp features, the legendary Ahilya was the epitome of classical Arya beauty.

White as a rose, she was delicately boned and featured, full breast and wide hips divided by a waist a wasp would have envied, with a smile that could have melted the snows on Mount kailasa and eyes so mesmerizing, even Sita found herself unable to look away. (Seige of Mithila, 427)

Women in Banker’s The Ramayana series are emancipators and they attempt to liberate themselves from all the worldly believes.

Sita, the principle women character in the Ramayana is named after the ‘furrow’ where her father found her. The word ‘furrow’ also refers to female reproductive organ. Sita is portrayed as a fertility goddess, intimately connected with the nature.

. . . Her name was Sita, literally ‘furrow’ in Sanskrit. She had been so named because her father Janak had found her in a clay cot placed in a deep furrow in the single field which he himself ploughed each year. All her life, she had heard the legend whispered around her: that she was the daughter of Prithvi, mother earth herself (Armies of Hanuman, 342)

She loved to preserve the nature and cared for the animals around her. From the beginning, Sita in the Ramayana has been created as the child of the nature. She has been the subject of exploitation from the minute she gets married to Rama. When Rama was sent on exile she followed him, she longed for a permanent place, when Ravana abducted her she was shocked and could do nothing to protect herself from the all powerful Ravana. Just like the land being exploited by the human race. When Rama conquered Ravana he orders Sita to pass the chastity test by entering the fire. Sita, an obedient wife acts according to the husbands order and passed the test. Here the readers can find how a woman has been objectified and how much suffering she has to undergo to satisfy her husband. When Sita entered Ayodhya she was not accepted by the people of Ayodhya as she was in another man’s place for nearly a year. Thus Rama sends her on exile, where she meets Valmiki and gives birth to Rama’s twin boys Lava and Kusa.

. . . there was no love there. No compassion. No mercy.  
Only ruthless justice. He spoke. And even before he spoke,  
she knew what he would say.  
A single word, more terrible than volumes.  
'Exile'. (Vengeance of Ravana, 320 )

When Rama requests her to reunite with him, she rejects and went back to her mother Earth. Sita loved Rama wholeheartedly, but all she got in turn was shame, violence and solidarity. One can see a strong bond prevailing between the nature and Sita. She was born from mud and she returned to her mother Earth at the end. Whenever there is any difficulty for Sita it was evidently seen that the nature is turned into chaos.

A deafening impact exploded into the morning sky. Suddenly, the world turned dark as twilight, the sun blotted out by a force as powerful as the brahman mantra that had brought the ganga-jal rain only hours earlier. The sky rolled and setthed with ominous colours like a vast backlit cyclorama in a Sanskrit drama: some tragic epic of warring devas and Asuras. (Demons of Chitrakut, 20)

In the case of Ahilya who was seduced by Lord Indra in the disguise of the husband, was turned to a stone by her husband for her impurity. Ahilya was given no opportunity to express her feelings or situation. Gautama without caring the psychological condition of Ahilya cursed her to be a stone. This shows how Ahilya was victimized by the lust and power of men. The brutality of men turned her to be a stone, and after very long years of solidarity she w\as turned to her human form when she received the grace of Rama's feet.

In both the cases it is clearly seen that women are being inflicted with violence and domination by men. In the Ramayana women are treated just like the way men treat land. Women are being exploited and are seen as mere objects without feelings and desires. Though women are celebrated as Goddess they are treated only as a source of fertility. It is evident that in order to understand women on must understand nature and vice versa. When man keeps on exploiting the nature he has to face its consequences, in the same way when loses her patience she can destroy anything with her power. Women like the nature must be respected, adorned and nurtured as they are the source of all living things.

#### **Work Cited:**

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