

The Critical Analysis of *the Forest of Enchantment* under the Ecological values of Indian Knowledge System

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Abstract : The Indian Knowledge System is not merely a system but it is a lifestyle chosen by Indian sages after a great research on life. These sages were the holy hermits who continuously worked on the temperament of human beings and selected a great life style which sooner converted into religion. It is great tradition of valuable knowledge which gives us moral lessons in every field life. It covers science, Arts, Literature, philosophy, conventional science. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni in her *The Forest of Enchantments* (2019) has given a beautiful account of old Indian knowledge system which aims to carry forward the wisdom of Jnan, Vignan, and Jeevan Darshan to the next generation. The present paper is an attempt to criticize her descriptions of Indian Knowledge system through the Ecological perspective and highlight the practical utility of the noel in solving contemporary problems.

Keywords: Ram, Values, Sita, Forest, Perspective, Modern, Life, Ecological.

Introduction - Indian Knowledge System has a rich texture of knowledge. Its fabrics are woven after a great observation of humanity which Indian civilization has designed with a great colour of values for a beautiful and astonishingly massive human body. Its intellectual stitching with a variety of skillful cutting of greatest manuscripts of the world has given him a body-shaping-look for every human body with a veil of well-documented heritage of texts. It is because of its universality, the Thinkers and Scholars of the whole world called this Land *Bharat Mata* where knowledge is not segmented by narrow walls but it flows through small brooklets.

India has a long chain of Knowledge system like the holy river Ganges River. Since the time of *Upanishads* to the time of *Aurobindo* India's knowledge is the outcome of life research. This knowledge system has a strong foundation in our culture, our philosophy, and the whole Indian spirituality. India has got it after the evolvement of thousands of years. It includes Yoga, Ayurveda, Vedanta, with Vedic sciences. It has such Knowledge universal appeal that it is still applicable in the modern world in several ways.

The specific thing about Indian System is its Sustainable living. It is based on the idea of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*, means the whole world is one family. It emphasizes the interdependence of all beings to attain sustainable living practices including the idea of "live and let live" Considering environmental issues and the demand

for natural resource conservation and preservation, these principles are getting more and more important.

The other remarkable thing about Indian Knowledge System is its base. It is based on the concept of Well-Being of humanity. The concept of *Yoga*, the concept of *Ashram* system the concept of *Brahmcharya* and the concept of *Shalya Chikitsa* (Indian medical system known as Ayurveda) all are based on the well fare of humanity. It advocates for natural mending ways, personalized curatives, and a focus on forestallment and conservation of health.

India is a land in which knowledge was guided by Lord Krishna through the *Bhagwad Gita* and later it became the greatest means of liberation and self-purification. Chitra Divakaruni Banerjee has encompassed the beauty of Indian Knowledge system in her literature so skillfully that it has become an enlightened lamp that has continued unbroken. Chitralekha Banerjee is an Indian-born American female poet, author and thinker. By profession, she is a Professor of Writing at the Houston University. She is famous for her Creative Writing skills, her short story collections, her novels and her small documentaries. She has "American Book Award" in her account for her famous novel *Arrange Marriage*. *The Mistress of Spices* and *Sister of My Heart* are two other famous novels which expose her subtle sense of writing. Her famous novel *The Word Love* was so appreciated by the readers that it was adapted for cinematic genre.

The Forest of Enchantment by Diwakaruni is the retelling of "The Ramayana" from Sita's point of view. This time the book comes to the reader not as an epic but as world's greatest tragic love story in which the brilliant heroine Sita retells her vision about all the happening of Ramayan with a new outlook. The story of the novel follows the life of Sita and her sufferings with a new echo. Unlike the Sita who is merely a neglected character of Valmiki's masculine narrative, Sita of *The Forest of Enchantment* is the most significant female character of ancient Indian Literature who gives a voice to express her feminine experiences in a male-governed society. Bejerjee's *The Forest of Enchantment* also gives a justified attitude for some very individual female-characters of this Old Indian Myth who are often relegated and misunderstood by the world and hence, History kept them at the margin. They are surpanakha, kaikeyi, Mandodari and Manthara. The Writress gives them an awe inspiring aura by exploring the other face of their powerful commitment, their love, their dutifulness and their emotional attachments. The book, in this way, is all about women's struggle to retain autonomy in a world that privileges men but it is also a treasure house of Indian Ecological Values on the other hand. A close reading of the text unearths the varied facts regarding the ecological values of Indian Knowledge system taught by the author through the theme and the character of the novel.

Key Findings: The Book reveals Sitas connection with nature since starting. When the novel opens, we see her in jungle. Sita, in fact, is known for her time spent in the *Dandakaaranya* forest and later her captivity in Sri-Lanka where she was kept specifically in the Ashok Vatika with a helper Trijata, before being rescued by Rama. *The forest of enchantments* starts with the description of Sita's reading of the manuscript of "The Ramayana" which Valmiki shared in her ashram. Ashram surrounded by several trees, was her home during exile period and the trees were planted by her. Sita while going through the Ramayana was not satisfied by how Valmiki has collected and highlighted each detail, she felt upset and focused on the breeze comes from the mango, coconut and jackfruit trees which she had planted by herself to get rid of her mental agony. The forest here, becomes a sanctuary for Sita, a place where she can connect with her true self and find strength in nature's resilience.

When Sita was agitated on Valmiki and told that that he didn't capture what she went through when she was alone in the darkness under the sorrow tree. Valmiki suggested her to write her own story she felt. She started writing about her hope, her despair, her negotiations, her pain with a red colour ink. The ink, Banerjee describes in the novel, was red as menstrual blood also appeared to her as the color of the flowers near which she had sat while spending her painful time in the palace of the demon king Ravana. Here, we see, Banerjee portrays nature as a "healing green canopy," offering Sita solace and a sense of

belonging after her exile.

The novel gives several examples of eco-friendly Indian Ladies through Sita's connection with Nature. Her voice un-mutes the voiceless green environment by her exuberant presence. At several places, in the novel, we find Sita is the eco-centric. She use to tap the roots, cares the plants, and also use to walk barefoot on the grass in the garden as a normal feminist torchbearer of marginalized human and non-human figures at a time when hegemonic masculinity (anthropocentrism) governed Indian literature.

The novel divulges her ability to love to nature and overcome any challenge with resilience through her special bond with nature about whom plants use to say "She is truly a goddess who has appeared on earth to bless us." (Diwakaruni1) Valmiki's epic emphasizes on nature's prediction over the sorrows of Sita. Through nature's perception a reader can get the accounts of the feelings of Sita. While aligning the nature sita presents a socio- cultural set of beliefs, rules and regulations of that time, and leaves little space for modern female experiences.

The narrative also uncovers an innately harmonious relationship that exists between Sita and her green environment. Sita takes a walk in the garden before her marriage on daily basis. She talks to the flowers and also knows flower therapy. Her strange affinity with plants and nature gives her a distinct, earthly appeal with other-worldly qualities. While the paper primarily focuses on the environmental spectrum, it is also important to observe the above in the light of feminism since women are born with a 'stronger' biophilic inclination towards their natural surroundings.

During her exile period she goes for Yoga practice in a natural atmosphere of deep forest for her internal, physical, and spiritual well- being. The green and aerobic atmosphere to lower the stress not only enchants the readers but also fascinates them as if they are physically present in that forest of enchantment.

Sita chooses to live in the forest instead of living in the palace during Lanka days. Forest embraces all her hardships and she finds freedom and empowerment in the natural setting of forest. It promotes her internal health, and increases her general heartiness without luxuries food and lavish life style. Sita, in this way, is portrayed as having a deep and innate connection with the natural world, drawn to the forest from a young age and finding healing and empowerment within its embrace. It is Sita's ecofeminis version who gets heal and becomes empower through the forest.

This paper primarily aims to investigate the innate spiritual relationship between women and nature through the approach of deep ecologism, an environmental philosophy. It advocates the necessity of replacing anthropocentrism with ecocentrism to avoid further ecological damage while allowing nature to heal naturally. A detailed character study of Sita reveals her transcendental

affinity with her natural environment, right from her mysterious birth to adulthood.

- **Re-imagining Sita:** The novel re-imagines Sita's story from her perspective, highlighting her strength, resilience, and connection to nature.

- **Challenging Traditional Narratives:** The novel challenges traditional narratives of the Ramayana by focusing on Sita's perspective and her relationship with nature.

Spiritual Growth: Spiritual Growth perceptivity into the nature of reality, mindfulness, and the tone are handed by Indian knowledge systems like Vedanta, a philosophical frame grounded on the ancient books known as the Vedas. similar training give advice on tone- enhancement, tone- mindfulness, and the pursuit of meaning and purpose, all of which are material in the ultramodern world where so numerous people are looking for lesser fulfillment.

Conclusion: Her nature is far removed from "shallow ecologism" because she views the world through an eco-

centric lens and accepts that she is only a mere part of the larger natural environment. Thus, this paper is an integral study at present, as it brings to the surface the influence of the deep ecology movement in The Forest of Enchantments and of Sita's ineradicable relationship with nature. A Feminist Ecocentric Retelling Divakaruni captures the myriad struggles faced by Sita and the other displaced female characters in The Forest of Enchantments (2019).

Referances:-

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