

Double Jeopardy Reimagined: Gendered Racism in the Retelling of the Ramayana in Amish Tripathi's *Ramachandra Series*

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ABSTRACT

Gendered Racism is considered to be the idea of double jeopardy because the individual is discriminated with two excluded identities. It is clearly projected in the myths like *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. Mythology serves as a guide for the formation of society. Through its social and economic hierarchy, every nation formulates its ideologies that facilitate the division of classes. Class differences not only create stagnation but also feed prejudice and gender inequity in society. Amish Tripathi is popular for his mythological series *Ramachandra series* highlights his characters by speaking for themselves, refuting traditional ethics made them strong, defy convention, remain truthful to the spirit of inquiry, master the secret art of perseverance, and carve out a place for themselves in a world that always appears to be working against them. This article exposes and analysis the sufferings of household women, abuse of lassie and depicts the social construct of disability and also proves that double jeopardy leads the humanity into the path of destruction.

Ramayana and *Mahabharata* are well known for their spiritual and philosophical thoughts. These epics discussed the bias in kingship, parenthood, and cultural matters. Amish Tripathi highlights the causes and sufferings of discrimination by retelling *Ramayana* in his *Ramachandra series*. Literature reflects the conditions of different facets of society from different perspectives at different times and providing readers with a range of theories to understand the varied behaviours that are carried out in the community. Amish mainly focuses on the gendered racism which reflects the overlapping and related types of discrimination that people encounter on the basis of both their race and gender.

Sage Vishrava marries Asura princess Kaikesi and he starts to humiliate her because of her clan. The incident serves as an illustration of how this kind of conversation has developed and how it has implemented the potential for male authority structures to influence a woman. The violation of a woman's respect, which is thought to live in her neglected body, through open stripping suggests that she no longer has respect for herself, her family, or even her nation. Feminism has been evolving as a concept for millennia, but the plight of women, who are the oppressed group in society, has not changed they still face the long-standing oppression of being born a woman. They have to overcome several restrictions and challenges to become a significant part of society. The profile and image of women have

been changed by feminism, who have gone from being poppets in men's hands to presidents, rulers, artisans, and teachers. It happens as a result of societal concerns about gender inequity. Gender inequality is caused by a variety of factors like marriage and families, political disputes, human manifestations, and other social settings in which society interacts.

Kaikesi being born a Asura princess she had her tough times after marrying Sage Vishrava. People born with disabilities are considered to be the Nagas. Kaikesi gives birth to the infant with disabilities so this made her husband to hate her and he discriminates her with gendered racism. Chromosomes structured the embryo in the womb during the time of pregnancy. Chromosomes are considered to be the molecular DNA wrapped around proteins where humans have 46 pairs of chromosomes: each 23 pairs form mother and father. Changes in the chromosomes are known as chromosomal abnormalities and result in birth defects like trisomy and monosomy. Sage Vishrava fails to support his wife because every mother feels the pain when she delivers the disability infants. In this society everyone is not ready to accept their failures so they blame on others likewise Kaikesi was insulted by her husband.

Raavan was treated insolently by his father, Sage Vishrava. In every facet of his life, Raavan faces prejudice and social exclusion due to a combination of factors including poverty, social isolation,

ignorance and a lack of resources and assistance from everyone. Even though Vishrava was a great sage he failed to understand the root cause of his disabilities and he preached to everyone that the nagas are considered to be the strains of humankind. During the birth of his naga son Kumbhakarna, he acted as a familicide person but fortunately, Raavan rescued his family from the conspiracy. This discrimination created an immense pain in the heart of Raavan and it made him think about the people of Nagas.

At the age of nine, Raavan works as a dock worker and he struggles hard for his family. He joined hands with Akampana and through his brilliant trading strategies, he became a popular trader in the lands of Lanka. During the trade, he rescued a small girl from the courtesan house and she reveals that due to her father's greediness, she was tortured and sent to the courtesan house by her father. Raavan considers the problem within the larger frameworks of violence against women and children, male sexuality and the social construction of masculinity.

New internet Watch Foundation (IWF) data shows 97% of all child sexual abuse material identified in 2021 featured the sexual abuse of girls. Whilst just 1% of the sexual abuse imagery shows boys, this accounts for 2,641 instances and 17% of the sexual abuse imagery of girls. (IWF).

Based on gendered assessments of child sexual abuse, which show that the majority of abusers are males and the majority of victims are women, feminists have contended that the problem is an exaggeration rather than a departure from the norm of heterosexual relationships. The eroticization of male power, and the sexual objectification of women highlights the link between the wants of far too many other men and the acts of certain sexually abusive males. Raavan understands how the money has turned the person into a hated and disguised so through the hands of the girl he gives the most painful death to her father. This incident depicts materialist feminism which aims to attract attention to the gendering discourses that support women's marginalization while concentrating on social structures which highlight the role of women.

Raavan became a great trader and he was disturbed by the thoughts of Kanyakumari, the girl whom he loved during his childhood days. Ultimately, Women enlighten us with wisdom and insight where the entire universe bows down to the glory of the wonderful woman. She leads society and imparts information to all. She is the daughter of a genius and a representation of wealth. Through Kumbhakarna, he came to know that the real name of Kanyakumari is Vedavati and she was married to Prithvi, a businessman in the Todee village. Raavan went to meet her and he finds that she is pregnant and expecting the child of her husband. He proposed his love to her but she gently refused his proposal and her words changed him into a complete man. After hearing her words, he plans to build a hospital for the people and treat them free of cost so he hands over the hundi, the bag of gold coins to her. On hearing the conversation between Raavan and Vedavati, Sukurman, a resident of Todee village plans to plunder the hundi from her. At the time Vedavati delivers her baby, she and her husband are murdered by Sukurman and he throws her baby into the woods. When the brothers visited the Vedavati in Todee village, they discovered that the couple had been stabbed several times. Her corpse was covered in a horrific red layer as the blood poured and froze around her. The residents in the Todee village didn't care about the barbaric act of Sukurman so Raavan massacred the residents and he gave a most brutal death to him by putting the burning charcoals in his mouth. This incident proves that the people have lost their moral values and their love for others so it proves that their hard-hearted have ruined their society.

Kubaer, the ruler of Lanka has become the puppet of Dashrath, the emperor of Sapt Sindhu and also, he plundered the wealth of Lanka by imposing huge taxes on them resulting in chaos in the lands of Lanka and he failed to be egalitarianist for his people. "The policy of establishing peace with kingdoms stronger or equal in strength. An opportunistic king would make amicable treaties with another king, do the handshake for his benefits, learn from the best, and then subjugate the opponent." (Kataria, 44). On seeing the socioeconomic situation of Lanka through Kubaer, Raavan requested Dashrath to reduce the taxes imposed on them but he ignored his request and declared war against him. Through

his brilliant war strategies, Raavan won the battle against Dashrath and he freed his land from the crisis. The primary duty of the emperor was to protect the empire from all kinds of crises but his over-confidence and abuse of power made him go against the law of dharma. This shows that even the emperor didn't care about his citizens so it led him to the downfall of his empire. Dashrath hates Kaushalya because during the birth of Ram, he is defeated by Raavan in the battle of Karachapa and also, he believes that his wife Kaushalya represents the symbol of misfortune. Power disparities in society are a result of gender role stereotypes, which traditionally attribute submission and helplessness to women and authority and domination to men. Women are expected to take on the job of caregiver and play a supporting role in decision-making, while men are supposed to be the family's providers and decision-maker. Male dominance and marital discord are predictive of the term Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) refers to aggressive or abusive behaviour intended to dominate, manipulate or terrify another person. Either a single occurrence that can have a lasting effect or a series of episodes spread over several years may be involved. Traditional gender role expectations serve as the foundation for maintaining men's power over women, which shapes attitudes toward IPV and causes cultural discord and conflict in intimate relationships.

Raavan became the king of Lanka and he eliminated the custom of animal sacrifice, Satipratha, the custom of burning widows alive, and for widows, he introduced the right to remarry. "Few Marxists today believe, as Marx did, that the proletariat will one day spontaneously develop the class consciousness needed to rise in violent revolution against their oppressors and create a classless society" (Tyson 52). The people of main lands considered themselves Devas and they considered the people of Lanka as the Asuras and they started treating them as their slaves so on seeing this he wiped out casteism in the lands of Lanka. As a true egalitarianist, He considers the growth of the common man as the growth of the nation so he gives free education also, he considers that his citizen's health is more important to him so he provides free treatment to everyone. The belief that all people are created equal in terms of their intrinsic value or moral standing is a common characteristic of egalitarian policies. Because of this, everyone should be treated equally under the law and also, it has backed several contemporary social movements, such as feminism, civil rights, human rights, and the Enlightenment. Soon he became the people's loveable king and he made Lanka the wealthiest nation in the world.

Raavan secretly tracks the economic development of Sapt Sindhu by designating Manthara, a businesswoman in the region, as his spy. The rakhi sister of the four Ayodhya princes, Roshni, was a lovely little child she had. Aside from being a wise woman with a fair level of temperance, she is a specialist physician. She selflessly went to the wiped-out people and nursed them back to health. Dhenuka and his posse attack Roshni and carry out a brutal massacre. Since she was well-known for her foundation, ease, and pious nature, most people find her passing to be an amazing shock. Women have been subjugated for generations, their human rights have been disregarded, they have been viewed as inferior members of society, and their tasks have been limited to childbirth and household duties. Misogyny can manifest itself in a variety of ways, including masculinity, sexual assault, discrimination based on gender, disparaging women, and violence against women. "One should honor a woman and not insult anyone. If there was justice, we had to fight it at any cost" (Neelakantan 17). Hinduism offers a variety of perspectives on women's status and some texts portray women as the ultimate deity, while others limit them to the roles of wife, mother, and daughter, as outlined in the Manusmriti. The law could not reject Dhenuka because he is underage. Even though Ram was upset by his Rakhi sister's unexpected death, he stayed in the law while the other seven assistants were put to death which made Bharat assassinate Dhenuka in the way of adharma.

Kushadhvaj, Janak younger brother invited Raavan to the Swayamvar of Sita. Vishwamitra plans to make Raavan an antagonist in front of everyone so he makes Ram marry Sita and insults Raavan in the court of Mithila by saying that he is an asura. This discrimination has created vengeance in the mind of Raavan and also and he considers the insult as an insult to his nation so

he declares war on Mithila. Even though Vishwamitra was a great sage, he must understand the situation and try to stop the war but he indirectly triggers the war between Raavan and Ram. Raavan fights in the way of dharma but Vishwamitra compels Ram and makes him defeat Raavan by firing the Asuraastra, a forbidden nanotechnological and biological weapon which is used for mass massacre. Asuraastra emits the mutated gas against the warriors of Raavan and it made them to be paralyzed in the war field. Raavan is defeated in the battle of Mithila and this incident proves his innocence and dark side of the advancement in the technologies.

Ram undertakes the banishment for fourteen years along with Sita and Lakshman and they settle in the woods of Panchavati. Shurpanaka and Vibhishan, half-siblings of Raavan visit the trio in the woods and at that moment she proposes her love to Ram but he rejects her proposal and advises her to propose her love to Lakshman.

He is trying to fool you. You can be his second wife! Go to him, is he not better looking than me? He will make a better husband too, dear lady.' She was confused, looking from one brother to the other: there was a certain tension in the air and suddenly Surpanakha realized that both of them were laughing at her, reeling her to and fro like a toy (Kane, 193)

The brothers neglected her proposal and they discriminated against her, this made her furious and she tried to attack Sita but it ended up with the brothers punished her by cutting her nose. Since piercing a woman's nose as a form of punishment is illegal and should not be done, Lakshman is regarded as adharmā. Shurpanakha went to Raavan seeking justice because she felt humiliated. She looked hideous and covered her body with blood in the court of Raavan. He is shocked to find her at his house and realizes that she has been seriously injured by someone.

Raavan came to know about the tragedy that happened to his sister and he became outraged to punish the brothers. Ram and Lakshman were in exile so Raavan could not declare war on them so he planned to show the pain of injustice that happened to women by kidnapping Sita.

Nothing stops us from demanding more from the Malayaputras as long as the Vishnu remains imprisoned in Lanka.' Raavan nodded. 'Do we go ahead then?' asked Kumbhakarna. 'Yes, we have to kidnap Sita.' 'Remember, Dada, it's not about vengeance. We will only ask for what we want. We just need some leverage over the Malayaputras. We will not kill the Vishnu.' Raavan nodded. 'She will be our prisoner.' 'Yes.' 'A political prisoner. She will be kept in one of the palaces in Lanka, not in the dungeons.' (344)

Raavan kidnaps Sita with the help of Mareech, his maternal uncle and he takes her to the land of Lanka. He is shocked to know that she is a daughter of Vedavati and at that moment he sees her like his daughter. By kidnapping Sita, everyone believes him as a womanizer but his close ones only knows that he has taken her only as a political prisoner. Sita and Shurpanaka symbolize two completely different parts of the feminine experience that are poles apart. Women had no identity of their own, and any identity they did have was a result of the primeval myth, which is social typecasting. In the name of duty and chastity, Sita endures suffering and humiliation in silence.

Hanuman, the messenger of Ram visited Lanka and he killed the son of Raavan, set fire to the lands of Lanka and discriminated against Raavan in the court of Lanka. According to Dharma, a messenger cannot be harmed by the king or anyone in the country. Even though Raavan has lost his son, he doesn't punish him and he orders him to get out of his country. Ram organizes the troops of Kishkindha and he declares war against the Lanka. Vibhishan betrays his brother and joins hands with Ram and he reveals the

strength and weakness of Raavan to him. Due to the betrayal of his brother, Raavan has lost his dear brother Kumbhakarna and loveable son Indrajit in the battle.

I galloped towards Ram with my Chandrasa sword. Ram embraced his longsword and rushed towards me, producing a wailing cry. The deafening clanks produced by the striking swords could be noticed many Yojanas away. I hit his shoulder with the pommel of my sword, grasped him by his neck. He quickly knocked in my stomach with his elbow that threw me off him (Kataria, 181) Even though Raavan has battled ferociously, he is defeated by Ram with the help of Vibhishan. This battle proves that Raavan has followed dharma till his last breath even in his critical situation. During the Vedic era, women were either regarded as slaves or goddesses. In any case, their feminine emotions were disregarded, and they were forced to act by the standards established by the male-dominated society. They were not permitted to show their own emotions. Comparing Sita with Shurpanaka, we find that both their affronts and sufferings are obvious and the result of male family members. For their families and family honor, they have both made sacrifices. Society discriminates against a person when he or she is incapable of enjoining the rights on an equal basis so it leads to the bigotry and bias in the society. Like a match stick everyone's talent is hidden in some places if you discriminate against the person, it will create a dispute in the society. This article highlights the impact of Gendered racism and also it suggests that we should treat everyone with humanity.

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