



Sexual Symbols in Khasi folklore and its comparison with Indian Mythology: The Ramayana

Daphysha M Shabong

Department of English, Martin Luther Christian University,

Research Scholar, Shillong

daphymzephaniahshabong@gmail.com

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.36892/ijlls.v8i1.2529>

APA Citation: Shabong, D. M. (2026). Sexual Symbols in Khasi folklore and its comparison with Indian Mythology: The Ramayana. *International Journal of Language and Literary Studies*. 8(1).341-353. <http://doi.org/10.36892/ijlls.v8i1.2529>

Received:

20/12/2025

Accepted:

30/01/2026

Keywords

:

Conscious

and

Unconsci

ous,

Sexual

symbol,

Phallic,

Patriarch

al society,

Identity,

Archetype

Abstract

A symbol has multiple meanings and some resemblance to what it is supposed to represent. The paper deals with the sexual symbol in Khasi folklore, focusing on the Khasi myth Ka Tiew Larun and the legend Ka Kshaid Dain Thlen, and on the Indian mythology of the Ramayana. Folklore is a word coined by William John Thoms in the periodical 'The Athenaeum' in 1846. Folklore is an academic discipline whose subject comprises the totality of literature historically transmitted orally or in imitation. The origin of the Khasis, or the Hynniew Trep (seven hut), is their heavenly abode through the golden ladder, or Sohpet bneng peak. Khasis is blessed with various folklore dealing with the myths and legends and folktales. A very few comparative works have been undertaken to analyse how sexual symbolism functions differently within the Khasi folklore and the Indian mythology. Using the qualitative methods of comparative textual methodology of feminisms, mythological criticism and psychoanalytical theory, this paper portrays how the bodily metaphors and natural elements show sexual symbols. The myths and legends of the Khasis portray the sexual symbol be the myth of Ka Tiew Larun where she uses the bamboo to quench her thirst but she became pregnant so the bamboo serves as a phallic symbol and the legend of Ka Kshaid Dain Thlen where the serpent, the cave serves as a symbol of sexual symbol. The paper also concentrates on the Indian mythology of Ramayana, it is the greatest epic in Indian mythology. But this great epic can take the form of feminist thought, the position of woman in a patriarchal society. The paper portrays the value of woman, gender and the identity crises of woman in a male dominated society. It will examine the role of Sita, how she suppresses her identity, because of her husband, how she had to face all the challenges and she is the archetypal of all the woman. The paper argues that Khasi Folklore portray sexual symbol as Freud interpret in his Interpretation of Dreams, whereas Ramayana uphold patriarchal control through the ideals of chastity and sacrifice. The comparative analysis reveals that Khasi folklore and the Ramayana employ sexual symbolism differently to reflect their respective cultural structures. Khasi myths encode sexuality through natural symbols such as bamboo, snakes, and flowers, suggesting an organic and symbolic engagement with fertility and desire. In contrast, the Ramayana represents sexuality through the control and regulation of women's bodies, particularly through Sita's trials, exile, and chastity tests, thereby reinforcing patriarchal authority. While extensive scholarship exists on the Ramayana and feminist interpretations of Sita, limited academic attention has been given to Khasi sexual symbolism in comparative frameworks. There is a significant gap in interdisciplinary studies that juxtapose indigenous oral traditions of Northeast India with classical Indian epics to examine gender, sexuality, and power.

1. INTRODUCTION

Who are the Khasi people? The name 'Khasi' refers to a group of people that inhabits the three districts of Meghalaya State, India. The Khasis use words like *Hynniew Trep-Hynniew Skum* to refer to themselves. They identify themselves as a harmonious composite of sub- group

Sexual Symbols in Khasi folklore and it's comparison with Indian Mythology: The Ramayana

like the Bhoi, War, Khyriem, Pnar, Lyngngam, Maram and others. They are a special tribe in India. They are protected as Scheduled Tribes (backward classes or people) under the sixth schedule to the constitution of India under Article 214(2) and 275(1). (Mawrie, 2009) The constitution prescribes protection and safeguards them either specially or by way of instituting their general rights as residents with the object of promoting their educational and economic interests. From traditions many Khasis believe to this day that they belong to the *Hynniew Trep- Hynniew Skum* meaning the seven Huts who were separated from their heavenly brethren of *Khyndai Trep- Khyndai Skum* (Nine huts) at a certain point of time. The legends say that there was a bridge from the Sohpetbneng peak (Is situated about 20 kilometer north of Shillong, on the right side of Shillong-Guwahati Road) which connected heaven and earth in the remote past. At that time the people belonging to the seven huts and nine huts used to go up and down the bridge every day and there was a very close link between them. It was said that the bridge broke away because of the sins committed by the people of the Seven huts. The legends may appear irrational but the fact remains that the Khasis were on the hills of North-East India quite a long time back. Scientific researches done in the last century on the origin of the Khasi have led to different conclusions.

Indian Mythology is one of Indian Culture's richest elements which further enriches it and makes it unique in the world. Over generations, various stories in Indian mythology have been passed from generation to generation either orally or through carefully preserve records. These tales, which form the backbone of Indian mythology, are a great medium for people to instill interest in Indian Culture in the younger generation, both natives and non-natives. The myths, legends, and folktales that form the backbone of Indian mythology are a powerful medium that instil interest in and impart the values of Indian culture to the younger generation. In Indian Mythology, the fascinating feature of stories is that they are typically intended to express hidden details, law and maxim to guide our everyday lives. According to many historians, Hinduism is the oldest religion in the world, with origins and practices dating back over 4000 years. Today Hinduism is the third- largest religion behind Christianity and Islam, with around 900 million followers.

Ka Tiew Larun (the flower/plant named Larun)-



Every known society in the World has literature in written or oral form. Such literature has withstood the ravages of time. When one studies folklore, one understands its value and also gets a clear insight into the tradition, customs and culture of that particular society (Nonglait, 2013). The myth of *Ka Tiew Larun*, is about two siblings, it is said that a natural disaster or a plague devastated the entire village, the name of the village is not known to anyone, everyone in the village died but only two people survived from the plague and they were brother and sister. The brother's name was u Het and the sister's name was ka Shatai. They were the only two who lived in that village, the brother took good care of his sister and wanted to protect her. He worked extremely hard at a minimum distance from their home in nearby fields so he could watch over her and she could remain safe within the house. However, one day she insisted on going with him to the field and he was not able to refuse her, they went to the field for their work, ka Shatai felt very thirsty so her brother went to bring some water for her. But he could not find it anywhere, so in order for his sister to quench her thirst; he cut a piece of bamboo with sufficient of water and let her drink it. They did not know that there was a baby snake in the water. Ka Shatai accidentally swallowed the baby snake along with the water. So as days went by, she fell ill and turns very pale and weak, her stomach start swelling. Her brother became suspicious towards her; he thought that maybe someone impregnated her during his absence. So, one day he decided to hide himself under the bushes near his own house, while she was asleep to check upon his sister. But to his surprise he found out that a big snake came out from her mouth. On seeing this, he killed the snake when she was asleep, and buried it next to the flower Tiew Larun. When she woke up, he narrated her what happened and asked her not to go near the flower, because if the snake bones enter her legs, then she will fall ill and no one can cure her then.

But when this flower was on full bloom, it looked pretty and attractive flower. This lured ka Shatai and could not stop herself from going near that flower and she ended up plucking the flower. On reaching there, a bone of the snake gets into her legs and she once again fell ill. Having brought this fate upon herself, her brother left her and ran far away because he could not see her in pain and suffering. But, then one day a king arrived in that village while hunting, he felt thirsty so he went and search for water to quench his thirst, on reaching her house, he found the girl lying in her bed. He called his doctor and asked him to treat and cure her from the disease, the doctor cure her by removing the snake bones from her foot. As she regained consciousness, she narrated the whole story to the king, the both fell in love. Ka Shatai started to recovered, but she was unhappy as she missed her brother by her side. The king noticed this and when he knew the reason for her sadness, he told his people to make a figurine of a man and dresses it with the brother's old garment. The king ordered the figurine to be put in the market area and whoever shows concern about the clothes he wore to

be detained. So, as plan one man came forward and showed interest in those clothes, he was arrested and taken back to his home. The brother was filled with joy and happiness to see his sister in a healthy condition, and both of them reunited back together. The king asked the brother to let him marry his sister and to become his queen, the brother agreed to this as he was the one who cured his sister from the illness, they both got married and it was a happy ending.

2. KA KSHAI DAIN THLEN (THE MAN-EATING SERPENT, U THLEN)-

The legend of u thlen, eater of humans, is still believed to this day people. Even at present times, this man-eating blood sucking serpent in reference to diseases like a plague or some other deadly infection as the modern connotation of this creature now represents it as the source of a deadly disease in which a person loses his natural colour and becomes weak and frail with his face and stomach blown. They claim in some parts of the Khasi hills people still keep this creature and feed it with human blood by killing them. Thlen (the serpent), at first did not need a keeper or a killer who feasted on human blood. Yet the tale of how he turned from a man eater to a blood- drinker, and how he turned himself into a dependant being, really started somewhere in the dim past. According to legend, Thlen was a mythical evil creature dwelling in the forest of Sohra. This was in olden times. It was said in those times that he could even change his shape and size at will, but his main or favourite form was that of a huge python, lying with his enormous mouth open in a cave in Dainthlen, a place in the western suburb of Sohra, and his tail tapering off towards Lingkhrong, a few kilometres away from Sohra. But how did the thlen come into that tunnel to live? Where is the serpent from? It is believed that Thlen is of superhuman lineage. He was the son of Ka Kma Kharai, the depraved daughter of U Mawlong Syiem, the chief god of the area surrounding Mawsmal, a village of Sohra. Ka Kma Kharai was herself a goddess presiding over caves and trenches, but her name was synonymous with profligate life among the gods and she was shunned by all. Having lived a harlot's life and degenerated into a wicked and evil fairy, ka Kma Kharai was finally cursed by a witch, a deformed demon whose existence so stirred up her father's anger that she had to leave the family and search for new living territory of Sohra or Cherrapunji, she chose to make these lovely gorges her permanent home. But a harlot by nature, she soon found a burden on her child, and decided to put him in a cellar at the foot of the Pomdolo falls. She chose the cave for a purpose, being an evil creature, an adversary of humanity, she decided to have her child grow up on nothing but human flesh. She specifically chose this cave as it was an end route, with the largest and most famous market place in Ri Hynniew trep (the seven huts). Therefore, in those days, many wayfarers travelled to and from it, and so it happened that from the day the thlen was placed in the cave, he lay waiting for the passer-by and whenever people went in groups of three, five or seven, Thlen would pull one of them and swallowed the person completely. And that was how, the thlen grew up. The lord who is the saviour of all, saw it all, and who knew

perfectly that the purpose of the thlen was to destroy the human race from the beautiful hills. Guided by the signs and symbols of God, people ask help from U Syiem or chief of the village. The syiem became concerned about the situation of the villagers and visited Suitnoh (He is like a high priest or a guardian whose task was to preserve the world health and virtue, most importantly he invoked offerings and sacrifices, each of which was intended to depict thlen's cruelty, the suffering of mankind, and to give a helping hand to bring an end to the wild bloodshed by the evil beast.) Suitnoh gave his word to the Syiem that will rescue human race from the clutches of the evil beast. Suitnoh first visited the place of the Lyngdoh or the chief priest of the Lyngdoh, to make plans on how to kill the evil beast or serpent. Firstly, he ordered the Lyngdoh to build a smithy some distance away from the thlen's cave and next to make a massive iron ball and a pair of giant pilers there. When this was done and the instruments were prepared, he waited for the day of the market place, there he met u thlen (which appeared in his human form.) pretending to be on his side and act as a comrade, he welcomed him and ask "How are you? Suitnoh calls out to Thlen. It's been a long time since we met" (Nongkynrih, 2007). Thlen also asked about his health, as time passed both of them became good friends. One fine day when the time came to destroyed the thlen completely, he commanded the smithy to heat the iron ball to the highest degree, he went to his cave to pay a visit and took with him the heated balls of iron between the giant pilers and said to u thlen "Ahoi, Um! I have brought you the pork. Open up. Open your mouth, it's a rather large piece" (Kymphang, 68), the thlen open his mouth wide until he closes his eyes, to this Suitnoh threw the iron balls on his mouth, the thlen cried in agony and died, the death of the thlen was celebrated as the Suitnoh told the Lyngdoh to inform everyone who was present on the village to come to the place the next day and prepare a feast next to the thlen's cave. Everyone came and they start preparing the feast on the serpent's flesh; Suitnoh told everyone that, everything is to be eaten there itself and not even a bit of piece to be carried away, he did not give any reason for this. When the feast was done, everyone left, but the elders remain there to complete their ritual and give thanks to God. They also renamed the Pomdoloï falls as Kshaid Dainthlen fall or Dainthlen fall meaning the place where thlen was killed and carved up.

But unknown to all, an old woman took a piece of u thlen for her son as he could not attend the feast. She kept it safely for him but it happened that she forgot about it as if a mysterious power held her. One fine day a voice came out of nowhere, saying that he will make the old woman filled with wealth and money if only she kept him in the house with her, to her surprise she found that it was a small serpent who was communicating to her. She realized that fearing such a resurrection, the Suitnoh did not allowed anyone to take a piece of meat as it will come to live again. The woman got scared, and she tried running out but the serpent told her that they will also be punished her for what she has done. In stress and terror, she accepted the

thlen wishes, in return he would provide her with wealth and money. He demanded human blood. When the woman did not listen to him, the thlen took the life of her grandson. Soon after, she started giving money to people to hunt for human blood. It was from that time that the practice of hiring paid killers, or *nongshohnoh* for thlen's developed. Till today, the thlen is believed to exist in Khasi society. The keeper keeps him pleased by providing the human blood, or even in the form of hair and piece of cloth of the victims, the hair or piece of cloth would then be changed by the thlen himself into an image of a particular victim, which would be made to dance on a silver plate to the eerier throbbing of a small drum at midnight. At the end of this wicked ceremonial, the serpent would feast a little at a time on the image, starting from the feet upwards. This midnight ritual would continue for some time and when nothing of the image was left, the actual victim, who would have been suffering at home with all the pains and torture would ultimately pass away. But thlen is supposed to be incapable against those from the Syiem clan because Suitnoh himself was a Syiem, a king, a priest, a ruler among gods, and servants of God.

3. RAMAYANA

Ayodhya's beautiful city was the capital of Kosala's kingdom, and was ruled by Dasharat who was widely known for his combat bravery. He had even supported the gods sometimes in their war against demons, a right given to few mortals, the people of Daasharat loved him just like the gods, for he was kind and honest, yet Dasharat had a deep sorrow in him, as he had no son, despite marrying three times. His wives, goddesses of powerful nations, were all left childless. One day, the court sage Vasishta instructed Dasharat to make a sacrifice to get a son. The flames leapt high in the air as he prayed, and a human figure appeared from the flames. No one knew it was Restorer Vishnu, "Give this to your three queens" (Romes, 25). Vishnu told Dasharat, and handed him a nectar-filled cup, and they'll bear you sons. Dasharat fell to his knees, praised the god, and hurried to give his wives valuable food.

Not long after his first wife, Kaushaliya gave birth to a son called Rama. The second wife Kaikeyi bore Bharat and the twins Lakshman and Shatrughan were born to Sumitra, the last queen. As the boys grew up, Rama appeared to be highly skilled in kings' ways and equally skilled in the warrior's abilities. He represented the divine Vishnu spirit, for Vishnu was indeed partially reborn in him for a special reason on Earth. And even Rama did not know that he was part of a god. He represented the divine Vishnu spirit, for Vishnu was indeed partially reborn in him for a special reason on earth. And even Rama did not know that he was part of a god. He was loved by all and it was clear that he would be the most suitable king. Nevertheless, Dasharat had assured the father of the second wife when he pursued her hand that her son would be Ayodhya's heir to the throne. Kaikeyi, was the favourite wife of the king and was unable to bear to offend her. Lakshman had been especially profoundly attached to his brother

Rama from the outset. Ram travelled to Vaideha's capital where king Janak chose his daughter Sita's husband, Sita was the earth's daughter. She had appeared to king Janak from a furrow in a ploughed field while she was an infant, and was brought up as his daughter. Sita was simply another manifestation of Lakshmi, Vishnu's eternal wife in all her incarnations; this time she was resurrected to marry Rama. All Sita's suitors had to enter a competition to determine who would marry her. A Shiv bow had been put in the court centre and her husband will be the one who could lift it. Thousands have struggled and attempted to, then, the great joy of Sita, not only did Rama raise the bow but he was solid enough to smash it. News of Rama's upcoming wedding was sent to Ayodhya. After the festivities were over, Rama and Sita returned home where all, Ayodhya waited to greet them and there was more festivity and merriment to welcome Sita.

Years went by and Rama proved to be a good husband, Sita was a committed wife, and both of them were profoundly in love. The elderly king called a council of ministers, wise men and supported kings and declared his proposal to name Rama, king of Ayodhya, the king when to Kaikeyi but then she was against the decision and told him that her first wish is to send Rama into exile for fourteen years and the second wish is to declare Bharat as the heir. Dasharath was heartbroken, he did not believe that Kaikeyi who had always spoken, who had often said that she loved Rama more than her own mother, and had always proposed that he should be king, has changed her mind. Throughout the night he disagreed with Kaikeyi, but Kaikeyi's mind was up and Dasharath realized he had to keep his promise to Kaikeyi and her father. Rama went to get the blessings of his father and seeing the sad face of his father asked him the reason. Rama being a kind soul he says that there is no greater virtue than obeying one's parents. He left right away, and said that Bharat will make a successful king. Rama sadly said goodbye to his heartbroken father and then went to his real mother, Queen Kaushalya, to bid her farewell. He explained how the decision came around and begged her to be kind to Rama's exile. Rama then, went to say farewell to Sita and console her but she refused to be apart from her husband. His brother Lakshman also declined to stay home, and they left the kingdom that very day.

In the forest, a female demoness in the forest, Surpanaka becomes enamoured of Rama and is wounded by Lakshmana while attempting to kill Sita. She runs away to ask her brother Khara to take revenge for her. But Rama and Lakshmana defeat Khara and his troops, and only one member of their entire army survives, this lone soldier flees to the island kingdom of Lanka and begs a revenge on Surpanaka's brother, the powerful king Ravana. He learned about the beauty of Sita, so he wants to kidnap her. With manipulation and sorcery, he succeeds in luring Rama and Lakshmana away from Sita and kidnapping her and take her to Lanka. Rama and Lakshmana moved far and wide in search of Sita but to no avail. They eventually come across a band of monkey-men, who promise to support them. One of the strong warriors

Sexual Symbols in Khasi folklore and its comparison with Indian Mythology: The Ramayana

of monkey's i.e., Hanuman, is the ardent worshipper of Rama. The vanaras are searching for signs of Sita and discovered she was taken to Lanka. Hanuman goes to Lanka and he is informed that she is being held there. He informs Sita about Rama's well-being and promised to come back to rescue her. Hanuman sets fire at the entire city of Lanka before heading to the mainland. Rama, Lakshmana, and the vanars force create a causeway from India's tip to Lanka. They move to Lanka, which is followed by an epic war between the armies, where Ravana is killed by Rama and Sita is set free. They go back to Ayodhya, where Bharata gives the throne back to Rama.

When Rama was finally united with Sita, Rama asks her to undergo Agni parikshaa or fire test to prove that she was still pure, as she stayed in the palace of the demon. As Sita plunges into the ritualistic flames, Agni the god of flames lifts Sita, unhurt back to her throne, attesting to her pureness. Later rumours of impurity, lead to the banishment of Sita, after which she gives birth and raises Lava and Kusha in the ashram of Valmiki(hermitage). The twins who became Valmiki's learners and are born in ignorance of their identity. Later the twin boys ascend the throne of Ayodhya, but Sita, weakened at her banishment merges into the earth and the regretful Rama departs from the world to his heavenly abode.

4. SEXUAL SYMBOL REPRESENTED IN THE KHASI FOLKLORE AND INDIAN MYTHOLOGY OF RAMAYANA.

Sexual symbols in folklore often operate through natural objects and images that suggest fertility, creation and continuity rather than explicit sexuality (Harpham, 2013). The Khasi myths and legends represent many sexual symbols, so the Khasi folklore also represent the sexual symbol in the myth of *Ka Tiew Larun*. In the myth of *Ka Tiew Larun*, there are many sexual symbols. The word symbol derives from the Greek verb *symbollein*, 'to throw together'. It is an object, animate or inanimate, which represents or stands for something else. As Coleridge puts it, a symbol is characterized by a translucence of the special (Matthew Birchwood, Vedrana Velickovic, Martin Dines and Shanyn Fiske, 2013). Firstly, the bamboo is one symbol that represent male sex organ. The baby snake, that was present in the water, is another symbol of a male sperm which is present in a male sex organ. The sister becomes pale and weak and her stomach started swelling symbolises a pregnancy. The consuming of water from the bamboo through the mouth is also a symbol that they had committed adultery because lips of a female symbolise the female sex organ, a snake coming out through her mouth symbolises the period on which the women undergo during delivering a child. The killing of the snake symbolises the killing of the new born baby, because it is unwanted in the society, maybe they do not want anyone to know about the sin they have committed. The snake bones symbolise the pain that mother have for her child because a mother cannot forget her child in whatever form the child is. The syiem arrived in search of water because he was also thirsty

this thirst may also be another symbol of which the king also desires i.e., the desire of human flesh. The flower of the Tiew Larun (flower of the inedible yam) itself is a symbol of both the male and female sex organ, so that is why Shatai was attracted by the flower, as she craves for physical intimacy. In the legend of Ka Kshaid Dain Thlen, there are many sexual symbols in it, be it the serpent, the things they used for the feast and the cave itself.



Here in

this figure we can see an image in the shape of a mortar which represent the male sexual part.

This represents the hole in a female sexual organ, the mortar shape on top and the hole in the bottom represent the process of the sexual intimacy.

The figure is the Dainthlen falls, in this picture itself, we can see the sexual symbol taking the shape of a male organ and a hole below it with symbolise the female sex organ. In the above picture, below the fall lived the serpent and when Suitnoh killed the serpent, they had the feast above the fall, and in it consist the print of the sieve which was used for keeping the meat of the serpent, the print of the mortar and pestle and also the iron balls that were used for killing the serpent. The image of the cave itself is a sexual symbol, which symbolises the sexual intercourse between the male and female.

While Khasi folklore represents the sexual symbol in the form of fruits, musical instrument, animals and various other the Indian mythology of *Ramayana* represent woman as a sexual symbol. Women are one of the most underestimated and misrepresented figures in the history books, “literature and mythology construct woman as an abstract ideal rather than a lived subject” (Beauviour, 2011) in particular the religious scriptures and myths of these communities, in which women are either totally overlooked or mainly seen as bearers of the ideals of men’s culture. The best example of this is Sita itself, she represents the whole of the female society particularly in the patriarchal society. Sita is a perfect wife who serves her

husband, when he is exiled for fourteen years, upholds her chastity when she is abducted by Ravana, goes through the fire to prove her chastity during the kidnapping and even after passing all these tests, she leaves her husband Lord Rama peacefully when he asks her to abandon him. *Ramayana's* tale reveals that only males can be leaders and rulers of the patriarchal society, and women are usually supposed to serve their husbands and have no independent power transferred from father to son to fulfill the people's need and the community as a whole. *Ramayana* stated that women have historically been marginalized. In the Valmiki's *Ramayana* the fire ordeal of Sita is narrated, this event may certainly be considered unpleasant. The unpleasant act of Rama abandoning Sita shows his patriarchal dominance (Hazarika, 2014). Upon hearing the scandalous rumors circulated among the ordinary people, Rama abandons Sita in the forest, fulfilling his dharma as the king of Ayodhya displaying his patriarchal superiority. He is a leader who is always willing to put his duty before the joy of his own world.

Sita was the idlest wife but what she gets was that she had to stay all by herself bearing all the agonies and pain. The myth of *Ramayana* shows that women are only confined to their houses. When Lakshman drew the boundary for Sita not to come out from that boundary, but when, she was punished by Ravana taking her away to Lanka. The question arises that is the boundary that Lakshman drew for her was a boundary for all the woman? Does it indicate that women should be confined only to the four-grey wall, and their work is only to wait for their husband and cook and serve them? Do they not have any independence of their own? Sita's only fault was to be born as a woman. Furthermore, Sita was a pawn in the hands of Ravana to take revenge against Ram and later she became a pawn in her own husband hands, she had to undergo all the hardship and proved her purity. But was it Sita's fault? Is it not the demon who was infatuated by Rama that Lakshman wounded her and she went to her brother to avenge for her? It was the man's fault but why the blame came to a woman. "For she dwelt in Ravan's dwelling, --- rumors clouds a woman's fame---Righteous Rama's brow clouded, saintly Sita spake in shame." (Dutt, 2017) when Sita proved her stainless virtue by an Ordeal of fire, and she came out unharmed, then why was she exile again in the forest just because society told that maybe she is not chaste anymore because she stayed in Ravana's captivity. Rama only acted as a ruler, a man who is only to look after the welfare of the people but failed to attain the same towards Sita. He failed as a husband when he failed to protect her from Ravana's grasp and from society's probes. He only acted as a man whose actions reflected that woman is the other and cannot be compared with men- as women are inferior.

Sita has been symbolic of the ideal Indian femininity. Even now the Indian woman readily associates with her. Sita's common image that shapes Indian womanhood so powerfully is fundamentally associated to a very docile individual who gives infinite love embraces oppression, cruelty, abuse, shame and exile all for naught. This ideal archetype of wife is

viewed as a saint, voluntarily compromising herself for her man's purposes, without her own purposes. The men in her life, take her choices for her, firstly her father then husband, and others. Her husband is God himself to her and her redemption is through his service. She is his order in the world to come, in this one. *Ramayana*, tells us this common picture that has caused such tremendous harm to Indian femininity by taking away her rights and her ambition, her freedom and autonomy, her right to be completely human, is totally false. While under tremendous pressure to adhere to the expectations set by her deeply patriarchal culture, she refuses to be humiliated for being a woman and opposes any effort to undermine her integrity and force her into servile subjection. She's not hitting back because of her boundless love; otherwise, she is almost defiant in her freedom.

Her agnipareeksha or, ordeal of fire, is one of the most striking circumstances cited to prove Sita's utter lack of assertiveness and her absolute obedience to Rama's will, this epic is the most unforgettable image in which a woman entering the fire to prove to her husband her own chastity and one-sided devotion, and coming out unscathed. The epic reveals that, rather than being an indication of Sita's lack of independent will, this is a case of her claiming freedom. Sita's entry into the fire is not an act of submission of will but a case of resistance, rebellion, refusal. The flaw is the absolute love for husband; there is no other flaw in her. The test of fire is a fiery act of resistance, of defiance, the act of a woman of integrity who refuses to be exploited and compelled to live her life. On the terms of others, of a woman who refuses to be shamed because she is a woman, a woman who fails to see herself as only a woman's body, a woman's body that could be desecrated by a man other than her husband's pure touch. It is important to remember here that Sita does not once ask Rama to take her back, despite all her love for him, despite all her incapacity to live without him. She refuses to be exploited by these prayers; it would be against her integrity as a woman.

Sita was pregnant when Rama's exiled her all alone in the forest, Valmiki took her in his ashram and she gave birth to Lava and Kush, whom Valmiki nurture them with love and care and also princely skills like archery and also teaching them to read and write. Valmiki even instructed them to sing the Ramayana which he had finished writing by this time. The twins unaware of their parentage and thus, would recite the poem at gatherings. With their sweet recitation they were so well-loved that their renown reached the ears of Rama who called them to perform. The truth was unveiled in the court of Rama, that they both are his sons, they represent the reflecting image of the king, and that their mother was no one else than Sita. In sorrow Rama asked Sita to come back to the Palace. Sita perished forever, grief-stricken, Rama has chosen not to live anymore.

Sita is a woman who willingly relinquishes all the pleasures of a rich palace to walk the rough path of a dangerous, tough jungle as equal to her husband, as his companion, even as a

slave to his love, but refuses to live as his chattel, as his to be discarded and taken back as he pleases, or not exist at all. The earth opens up and takes her back in.

Rama did prove to be an ideal son, an ideal ruler, but did he prove to be an ideal husband and father. Analyzing the character of Rama in the *Ramayana*, his positive aspect can be seen but ignoring all his negative aspect. Even Rama the image of Lord Vishnu, portray a negative character, i.e., to subjugate their woman and confined them under their control. Rama portrays all the evil vibe like Ravana, this includes the binary opposition that both have positive and negative character. Rama did not prove to be an ideal husband exiled her under the condition when a woman needed more affection and care. He did not even think about his children, that what will happened to them and their future. The sons were deprived of all the love, they did not even know their original identity and was being raise without a father by their side, is this justice enough for Lava and Kush? It can be argued that Rama later accepted the children and Sita because she could give him the next heir to the throne i.e., the sons who will raise the fame and name of Rama. The question arises that if both were daughter would Rama accept them and take them back?

Thus, the focus on putting Rama on a high pedestal not only dehumanized other characters of the story, but also led his opposition to be depicted in the darkest shades and become objects of hate. In the *Ramayana*, one reveals the flaws in Ram's character and shows his brutality and atrocities. Sita can also be compared to Medusa the Greek mythology where Sita did not bow down to the patriarchal norms, but she came out bold and strong like Medusa as a weapon to not let the society crushes her to the ground but to rise up and fight for what is right and not to be in the clutches of male dominated society. Lakshman protected his brother when he was exiled, being a follower, he did not allow the evil hands get his brother but what happened when Sita was exiled, why was he silent? He left Sita alone on the forest without questioning his brother and did not point that his brother was wrong. Sita's appeal to Mother Earth to reclaim her was not the powerless reaction of wronged woman. It was a spirited, self-effacing statement of protest, when things went beyond endurance. Sita's message is extremely significant for the woman who live in this technically sophisticated modern age.

5. CONCLUSION

To conclude, the people of Meghalaya have a glorious history, a rich and diverse history and beautiful landscapes. Being one of the India's most beautiful states, Meghalaya is a favourite destination for tourists. Meghalaya, with Shillong as its capital is a plateau of varying elevations and was known as the 'Scotland of the East'. Folklore that has such disastrous effects can only survive over time if it is sustained by the social structures that produce it and by the changes faced by any society. When describing social circumstances is one of Folklore's roles.

Myths and Legends, like every other ancient civilization, hold a significant role. While being one of the most ancient literary books, *the Ramayana* with its timeless appeal has become a living mythology. The epic has a diverse relationship with society in all ages and tradition. The epic is an open text that is seldom seen in other religious traditions. The ample framework of *The Ramayana's* tale discusses different facets of the human characters, drawing on the fundamental truths about human circumstances in any era. The myth of Sita is one of the most talked about and when one analyses her story, various interpretations are possible. Some have humanised her and others have deified her, she remains an iconic character, and means a lot to modern women who see her as a womanhood symbol. An analysis of her character shows that it is only unparalleled in literature but also serves as a reference point for morality and self-actualisation.

This comparative analysis demonstrates that sexual symbolism in Khasi folklore and the Ramayana reflects contrasting cultural ideologies. Khasi myths articulate sexuality through symbolic natural elements, whereas the Ramayana encodes sexuality through moral discipline and patriarchal control. The comparative reading foregrounds how myth functions as a cultural regulator of gender roles. Rather than idealizing either tradition, the paper highlights how both narratives shape and contest women's agency within their respective societies.

REFERENCES

- Abrams, M. H., & Harpham, G. G. (2013). *A glossary of literary terms*. Cengage Learning.
- Beauvoir, S.de. (2011). *The Second Sex* (C. Borde & S. Malovany-Chevallier, Trans.). Vintage Books.
- Dutt, R. C. (2017). *The Valmiki Ramayana*. Vijay Goel, Publisher.
- Martin, V., & Fiske, S. (Eds.). (2013). *Dictionary of literary terms and literary theory*. Penguin Books India.
- Mawrie, L. B. (2009). *The Khasis and their natural environment*. Vendrame Institute.
- Nongkynrih, S. K. (2007). *Around the hearth*. Penguin Books.
- Hazarika, M. (2017). Gender roles and representation of feminine identity in the Ramayana. *Smart Moves Journal IJELLH*, 2(5).
- Nonglait, C. N. (2013). Society, oral tradition and folk literature. *Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 9(4), 31–38.