

# Retelling the *Ramayana* and its impact on the readers

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## ABSTRACT

*Scion of Ikshvaku, a novel is written by Amish. It is written based on epic, the Ramayana. An epic is a long tale in verse on a serious subject, told in a formal and elevated style whereas a novel is a story long enough to fill a complete book, in which characters and events are usually imaginary. The research paper analyzes the advantages and disadvantages of retelling the Ramayana in the form of a novel and its impact on the readers. It studies the Valmiki Ramayana in brief and how Scion of Ikshvaku influences the predominant social, political and cultural tendencies of the present. The research paper also brings out the ideology and culture of the Treta Yuga.*

**Keywords:** epic, novel, verse, predominant

## INTRODUCTION

When Maharishi Narada preaches Sankshepa Ramayana to Maharishi Valmiki, it inspires Valmiki to write the Ramayana. Valmiki-Ramayana is known as Adi Kavya and Valmiki is known as Adi kavi. It means that there was no poet or no poetry before Valmiki and his Ramayana. It is written at the end of Treta Yuga, which means collection of three things in Sanskrit. The influence of the Valmiki-Ramayana on Indian-culture is so wide and deep that it has always been regarded as one of the pillars of Indian culture and tradition. It is also called Vedopabrahamnam as it tells how to live our life. It incorporates the universal theme of struggle between good and evil. It is divided into seven kandas (parts) Bala Kanda, Ayodya Kanda, Aranya Kanda, Kishkinda Kanda, Sundara Kanda, Yudda Kanda and Uttara Kanda. Bala Kanda explains the boyhood and adolescence of Rama. Ayodya Kanda explains the scenes that are set in the Dasharatha's court including the exchanges between Kaikeyi and Dasharatha which leads to the exile of Rama. Aranya Kanda explains Rama's life in the forest during fourteen years exile and abduction of Sita by Ravana. Kishkinda Kanda explains Rama's residence with holy monkeys, slaying of Vali and quest for Sita. Sundara Kanda explains Hanuman's Lanka's burnt and the arrival of Rama in Lanka. Finally Yudda Kanda explains the defeat of Ravana, recovery of Sita, return to Ayodya and coronation of Rama. And Uttara Kanda explains Rama's rule in Ayodya, banishment of Sita, birth of Kusa and Lava, and Rama and Sita's disappearance.

Avatars of Vishnu that were seen in the Treta Yuga are fifth, sixth and seventh incarnations as Vamana, Parashurama and Rama. Rama is the Seventh Avatara and in the Yuga, there he leads a life of a man. During the Yuga, the power of humans slightly diminishes. Kings and Brahmans need to fulfil their desires instead of using mere flat of will. People grow more materialistic and less inclined to spirituality. Vishnu is born in the Yuga as the Avatara of Rama. He is the protector of 'Dharma' and destructor of 'Adharma'. Therefore, his Avatara incorporates all his activities in fullness that the common man does not lose faith in the ultimate victory of 'Dharma'. Lord Rama is treated as 'Maryada Purushottama' which means that he takes every step to be righteous in his life; if it is giving up his kingdom to keep his father's word and forsaking his wife, Sita.

Scion of Ikshvaku is an interpretation of several Ramayana versions like Adyathmika Ramayana, Valmiki Ramayana, and Kamba Ramayana. Basically it is written in the form of novel using colloquial language. The colloquial language will be a respite to the readers who couldn't follow the Ramayana from starting to ending. It is unlike the epic's structure. Usually an epic poem is a ceremonial performance and is narrated in ceremonial style, which is distanced from ordinary speech where as a novel is narrated in simple language. It is distinguished from the long narratives in verse of Valmiki. Within its limits Scion of Ikshvaku is

written in an interesting way with repartee conversations to create amusement and awareness of The Ramayana among the readers. Since it is written in the form of novel, Author Amish changed several situations and characters. The research paper analyzes what kind of effect it will be on the readers, if an epic is written in a novel form. As Scion of Ikshvaku is written based on the Ramayana, one can expect several changes in the novel. It also analyzes how the changes will impact on the readers. In fact there are a lot of changes have been made by the author.

### ANALYSIS OF SCION OF IKSHVAKU

Novel is the loosest form of the literary art, but its very freedom from all limitations allows it to give a fuller representation of real life and character than anything else can provide. Many hundreds of new novels appear every year, but their literary standard is not, as a rule, a high one, for, as W.H.Hudson remarks, "anyone can write a novel, who has pens, ink and paper at command, and a certain amount of leisure and patience." Novel need not be symmetrical in exposition, crisis, and denouement. It may begin with a crisis, and the rest of the book may be devoted to depicting how that crisis arose; on the other hand it may work patiently up to a climax in its very last pages. Using this advantage Scion of Ikshvaku begins the scene, abduction of Sita by Ravana which is actually in Aranya Kanda, the third part of the Ramayana then it goes to the scene, before the birth of Rama. The novel describes about birth of Rama in a different way which is not in any versions of the Ramayana. It says that Rama was born in inauspicious time, because of his birth Dasharatha was defeated by Ravana in a war. In fact Dasharatha makes "Ashwametha Yagna" with the help of Rishyasringa for offspring and feels very happy with birth of four sons, Rama, Bharatha, Laxmana, and Shathrugna; especially he is very affectionate to Rama.

Bharath's love story is created by the author in the novel to amuse the readers. It says that Bharath loves a tribal girl, Radhika the daughter of chief Varun during his stint at Vashista's gurukul. During the conversation between Rama and Bharatha, it comes to know that she is Bharath's fifth girl friend and Rama also encourages his love. This encourages the youth that it is nothing wrong in maintaining multiple loves. This would impact on the readers negatively, if they were not aware of the original version of the Ramayana. It is mentioned earlier that the Ramayana is treated as Vedam in India. Dasharatha and his sons' character is a symbol of Indian culture. The four sons abode to their father's word and they used to be sacred while their training in warfare. Roshini is a fictional character in the novel which was depicted by the author bluntly. In the novel Roshini is the daughter of Manthara, a rich merchant (actually she was a maid to Kaikeyi in The Valmiki Ramayana). She is treated as a sister by the four brothers. At one situation she ties golden Rakhi to them. Unnecessarily the author created Roshini's character in the novel. There are many more scenes like

Sita's swayamvara, Ravana and Dasharath's war, Manthara's character which are depicted in fictional way. Definitely these would impact on the readers a lot. If the epics are retold in the form of novels, certain measures need to be taken to prevent confusion among the readers.

### THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF RETELLING THE RAMAYANA IN A NOVEL FORM.

#### A. Advantages:

- i. Usually epics are written in thousands of pages, hence it is advisable an epic novel to the readers who want to know the story in brief.
- ii. As the literature has been taken over by novels, much as the world dominated before, people love to read novels.
- iii. Language in the epics is poetical so people can't discuss them in depth and feel unfamiliar.
- iv. The epic novel might increase the number of readers.
- v. One of the functions of literature is to challenge the accepted values of a society, and the Ramayana challenges those values almost at every point.
- vi. The epics explore what it means to be a human being in the world.
- vii. It may motivate to read the original version to know the facts in the epic.

#### B. Disadvantages:

- i. People assume that the fictional scenes are true and spread the same.
- ii. Since the epic novels reflect the present culture and ideology, readers may not estimate culture and ideology of the age.
- iii. It may not be possible to some people to read a series of novels.
- iv. It may be treated as a just thriller novel but epics are read with veneration.
- v. Authors write the epical novels for commercial purpose than inspiring people.
- vi. The epic novels have no rigid frame work, and authors take full advantage of freedom.
- vii. Some fictional characters leave the readers dissatisfied.

### CONCLUSION

The research paper studies the Valmiki Ramayana in brief and analyses the novel, Scion of Ikshvaku and how it affects the present society and culture. It also studies the epic novels' impact on the readers and advantages and disadvantages of it.

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