

Mapping a Marginal Voice: Understanding the Revisionist Portrayal of Dhanyamalini in Anandani's Debut Novel *Mandodari*

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Abstract :

The *Ramayana* is pregnant with immeasurable possibilities. The complex diversity of the original epic compels the re-tellers to locate the ignored characters and hidden meanings and produce a fresh version of the old tale in their own style. As old sets of ideologies are being replaced with liberal views on female sex and sexuality, an astonishing makeover of the stereotypically fabricated images of ignored mythological women has taken place in the era of mythology-fiction. Dhanyamalini, Ravan's junior wife, is an almost invisible figure in the authoritative versions of the *Ramayana*. She has been treated as the 'other' by Valmiki and his followers since ancient times. Manini J Anandani is a feminist revisionist writer who has attempted to create a new cultural identity for marginalized mythological women like Dhanyamalini by cross-examining those contrived paradigms that shaped and regulated Indian mind for centuries. In her debut novel *Mandodari*, she has challenged Valmiki's indifference to Dhanyamalini in the sense that she has allotted a separate space for the previously ignored woman in her narrative. The paper intends to conduct a detailed analysis of Dhanyamalini's character with the objective of bringing the most overlooked persona of the mainstream *Ramayana* from the margin to the centre. The paper generally applies concepts of feminism, myth criticism and revisionist mythmaking theory for a detailed analysis of her character with reference to Anandani's *Mandodari*, which is a woman-centric retelling of the epic.

Keywords: *Ramayana*, Dhanyamalini, mythology, feminism, revisionism.