CHAPTER IV

WOMAN CHARACTERS OF THE ASAMIYĀ SAPTAKĀNDĀ
RĀMAYANA & THE RĀMCHARIT MĀNAS;
CHARACTERISATION
4.1 Introduction

Human imagination depends upon the environment in which a man lives. The ideals and ideologies of the poets and other literatuers are also shaped according to the age and are changed along with the changes of the time. Therefore, different features are evident in the poetry composed in different ages. Considering the subject-matter and characterisation of the Rāmāyana composed in different regional languages of India, it is seen that the basis of all of them is the Rāmāyana of Vālmiki. Since the Rāmāyana has a tremendous influence on the mass-life, people appreciate it and get impetus from the characters depicted in it. Although all the regional writers took Vālmiki's Rāmāyana as the source; yet local variations are evident in them due to the influence of time and place. In other words, these Rāmāyanas took distinct shapes with independent identities. The woman characters in these Rāmāyanas are no exception to it. These differences in the characterisations may be due to four reasons basically: -(I) Ascription of super-humanity in Rām; (II) Influence of the age; (III) Local environment and popular stories and (IV) the Individual view points of the writers.¹

¹Dr. Rāmānath Tripathy - Rāmcharit Mānas Aur Purbānchaliya Rāmkāavya, pp. 179.
The woman is the queerest of all creation. It is said that even the gods cannot understand a woman. Generally a woman is adorned with kindness and love, pity and sweetness and softness of heart. But sometimes the statements like "a woman is feeble", "a woman is strong" and such others are also found using in respect of a woman. A woman is the symbol of the 'power in a mother'. So a good man does not ridicule a woman. In addition to these, a woman is regarded as the incarnation of the mother Goddess in the Tantras. Considering these qualities in a woman both Mādhakandali and Tulsīdas tried to depict their woman characters on the basis of the characters given in the original Rāmāyana.

The Rāmcharit mānas is a 'Charit Kāvyā i.e. a poetry of characters of the woman characters, Sīta is the prime one. All the qualities necessary for a 'Kulabadhu' (a chaste or respectable woman) like simplicity, nobility, love of children, respect for husband, strength of mind, love, affection etc. are all combined in her. Although Sīta was a worldly woman, yet Kandali has depicted her as the incarnation of the 'Bṛāhma Shakti'. He regarded her as the incarnation of Goddess Laxmi and possessor of supernatural powers. Of other woman characters, Kaushalyā is depicted as the symbol of Motherhood (Matriṭwa) and knowledge of Ethics; Sumitra as personified abandonment
and Kaikeyi as a person who does not deviate from her own aims and goals; and as such they are completely the idols of womankind. Moreover, Mandodari, wife of Ravana, as well as Anusuyā, wife of the sage Atri, are the symbols of chastity and duty of a woman. Shavari and Trijatā on the other hand represent the simplicity of woman-heart. Whatever it is, it is a fact that both the poets depicted the ideals of womanhood through their woman characters which are definitely to be respected and followed by the womenfolk.

4.2 PLAN FOR CHARACTERISATION

From the point of characterisation it is found that although both the poets wanted to keep the basic incidents and the characters of the original text intact yet they could not neglect the contemporary situations. Culture and religions implications, altogether. Kandali's Rāmāyana could not but added some local characters although it was primarily a translation of Vālmiki's Rāmāyana. It can be presumed that he made his 'Rāmāyana' an original creation and that he made it a Vaishnabite text through the religions fervour as expressed through his woman characters. Generally it is found that in any translation work, the translator has to be very careful particularly in illustrating the characters. As such
the translator has no freedom nor he can introduce any character outside the original ones. But some new characters are found to be introduced occasionally.

In cases of the Septa Kanda Rāmāyana and the Rāmcharit Mānas, it is found that although both the poets took Vālmiki's Rāmāyana as their source yet considerable differences are evident between them. The main reasons behind it, are the social situations, religions faith, culture, influence of the age etc. and more particularly the individual skill and knowledge of the Shastras of the translators. Therefore, considerable differences are evident in the works of Mādhab Kāndali, Tulsīdās and Kṛirtibāsi on the Rāmāyana.

4.3 CHARACTERISATION:

The only way to express one's personality is one's character. The virtues and vices of a person express themselves through his character. The incorporation of good character and personality makes a man great. Two female characters in the Rāmāyana, Sītā and Shurpanākhā are two diagonally opposite characters. In the character of Sītā there is abundance of patience while Shurpanākhā is a symbol of impatience. In both the versions of Rāmāyana, Kāndali's and Tulsīdās's, the female characters had great respect for Rām. What Kaushalyā and Sumitrā
had for Rām was love for their child (Vatsalya Priti) and what Sītā had was respectful love for Rām while what Laxman, Bharat, Shabari, Tarā, Mandodari and Trijātā had was respectful honour to God in the shape of Rām.

Since everything has two sides, Rām had two sides also - bad and good. Both bad and good make a society. Considering this fact, the poets illustrate their characters in their creations. In the Saptakānda Rāmāyana as well as in the Rāmcharit Mānas it is found that although Sītā had so many good qualities yet she had been made a narrow minded and suspicious ordinary woman. The harsh words used by Sītā to Laxman are the sufficient proof against her. Such things also are found in the case of Kaikeyee. Although she was a woman of high status, yet she is found to act according to the advice of Mantharā, a maid servant, which reveals that she was a woman lacking in her own personality. But, it is seen that although both the poets illustrate Rām and Sītā as ordinary human beings yet Kandali regarded Rām and Sītā as incarnations and Tulsīdās as his adorable deity.

\[2^\text{Saptakānda Rāmāyana - 3/3105.} \]
\[\text{and Rāmcharit Mānas 3/27/3.} \]
4.4 CLASSIFICATION OF FEMALE CHARACTERS

Both the poets of the Sapta Kanda Ramayana and the Rāmcharit Mānas, introduced several female characters in their creations to make their story flow like that in the Rāmāyana of Valmiki. Considering the virtues and vices generally, women can be classified into three classes - (a) Uttam (the Best), (b) Madhyam (the medium) and (c) Xamanya or Adham (Common or low category). But in case of the Rāmāyana characters, the female characters can only be classified into two - (a) Mukhya (Primary) and (b) Gauna (Secondary) ones. Of the female characters, Sīta and Mandodari are found to be the primary characters in both the versions of Ramayana; and the other female characters appearing in them are secondary ones.

The subject matter of this monograph is to make a comparative study of the female characters as depicted in the Sapta Kanda Ramayana of Shri Madhab Kandali and the Rāmcharit Mānas of Goswāmī Tulsīdās. But before going through the comparative study it is meet and proper to analyse the female characters as depicted by both the poets first then and then only it would be easier to understand the view points of the writers. Below we try to analyse both the primary and secondary female characters of both the Kāvyas.
The name of Sītā comes to our mind first as the best example when we are to furnish the name of a chaste wife devoted to her husband. The name Sītā has been used in the Rāmāyana in various ways. In the Rāmāyana, Sītā is known as 'Rām-patni', Rāma. The term 'Rāmāyan' has been formed in a 'Sandhi' (Junction) of two words Rāma and Ayana. Again the term Rāma is the combination of two words Rām and Sīta while 'Ayana' means 'Abhiyana' (expedition). So, the greatness which is found in Rām, is also there in case of Sītā. The poet used the term 'Rāma' several times during the time of 'Āryavāra' :

- "Rāma Rāmehyadināṭma Vijnepā"

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recognized as the daughter of Janaka by Vālmiki Rāmāyana. In the Rikveda, the term 'Sītā has been used to signify the lines made in ploughing. From this point Sītā is known to be the goddess of agriculture and the 'Bhumikṣṇī' (daughter of the soil) ; In brief, Sītā, who is the wife of the hero

\[3\] Dr. Pāṇḍuranga Rāo - Rāmāyan Ke Mahilā Pātra, pp.1.
of Rāmāyana, Rām, was also the prime heroine. Chastity and devotion to one's husband becomes visibly clear in the character of Sīta and therefore, she becomes the best ideal for Indian women.

The description of Sīta has been found in the Rāmāyana right from the Ayodhya Kānda to the last and therefore, the Rāmāyana has also been called the 'Sītāyā charit'.⁴ The character of Sīta contains all the necessary virtues of an Indian woman.

SĪTĀ IN KANDALI'S RĀMĀYANA:

The influence of Valmiki's Rāmāyana is clear on the Septa Kānda Rāmāyana of Sri Mādhāb Kandali. But Shri Kandali did not deal exclusively with all the unreal references made by Valmiki. His Sīta is completely an Assamese housewife for whom the husband is the only adorable deity. She wished that the relationship of husband and wife between herself and Rām might be eternal for all lives to come.

For Sītā, the delight and happiness of the husband is equally the delight and happiness for her. She felt the equal degree of distress at the time of 'Bānvāś' to the extent of

⁴Valmiki Rāmāyana, 1/4/7.
the degree of delight she enjoyed at the time of Ram's Abhishek (the ascendency of Rām to throne). Sītā told Rām with sorrow;

- "Āmi Patibratā Nērik Gosāin,
  Chalilā Kena Tejīā". ⁵

Sri Kandali depicted Sītā as a woman subduing all passions. His Sītā did never use harsh words to Rām. Even Shri Shankardeva in the 'Uttarā Kānda' depicted the violent form of Sītā. ⁶ But in certain cases Kandali also depicted the violent appearance of Sītā. What Sītā outburst towards Laxmanā during the 'Mayā Mrīga' episode is enough to prove her violent appearance. ⁷ But such a statement of Sītā proves her devotion to her husband. Because she did never behave so badly to him before. Even after coming back from the 'Vanvās' she declared in 'Ayodhya';

- "Āpad Tarilo Sab Devar Prasāde". ⁸

Due to the devotion to her husband, Sītā wanted to go for 'Vanvās' foregoing her palacial comfort and caring the

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⁵ Sapta Kānda Rāmāyana - 2/1425.
⁶ ibid. 7/7098.
⁷ ibid. 3/3103, 3105.
⁸ ibid. 6/6680.
least for deadly animals of the forest. Rām was proud of Sītā, one can find the proof of Sītā's respect, faith and devotion to Rām in the harsh words used by her to Rāvana. Sītā tried her best even in the forest to safeguard her chastity. She nourished all her usage even in the 'Asahok Van; In those days, when Lord Indra offered 'Pāyas' to her, she offered it to Rām and Laxman, as custom demands, and then only she took her part herself. She did not address 'Rāvana' face to face and she refused to ride on the back of Hanuman. All her activities proved the devotion to her husband.

That the women folk is not independent has been expressed by Kandali through Sītā. Certain terms used by Sītā during time of the 'Agni Parīkṣā' proved it sufficiently. She told Rām fearfully that she did not come with Rāvana voluntarily; but she was abducted forcefully.

- "Tirijāti Parādhin Naho Swatantari". 11

Since 'Tirijāti' (womenfolk) was not independent, she could do nothing and therefore, what Rām suspected was baseless.

9 ibid - 3/3155-57.
10 ibid - 5/4325.
11 ibid - 6/6508.
Sītā did not have the courage to challenge the injustice done to her by Rām. She made patience her only companion. But what violent form Shri Kandali depicted was only due to his compassion towards her.\textsuperscript{12}

Sri Kandali is found to be trying to depict Sītā as a common woman. So he depicted the grievances of Sītā as depicted before Rām were none but the Sullen resentment of an ordinary woman before her husband.\textsuperscript{13}

Although Sītā entered into the royal court at the request of sage Vālmiki, yet she reminded Rām of all the injustice made to her and entered into the ‘Pātal’ leaving her two sons with Rām. But even in doing so, she begged pardon from Rām and touched his feet before entering into ‘Pātal’. In short, although Shri Kandali regarded Sītā as an incarnation of goddess Laxmi yet he depicted her as an ordinary woman.

Shri Kandali's Sītā, although designed after Vālmiki's Sītā, yet in some places new elements were added by him.

**Sītā in the Ramcharit Mānas:**

The Rāmcharit Mānas is a "Charit Kāvyā". Sītā is the

\textsuperscript{12}ibid - 6/6511.

\textsuperscript{13}ibid - 6/7085, 7098.
heroine of the poetry of Tulsīdāsje. He wanted to establish that Śītā, who was adorned with so many excellent qualities like simplicity, pleasantness, chastity, devotion to husband affectionate etc. was the 'Sakti' of the 'Brahman'. It is seen however that Śītā of Tulsīdās is of a higher status than that of Śītā of Shri Kandali.

In the Rāmcharit Mānas, Sītā incarnated herself at the time of the worship of goddess Pārvatī.14 Tulsīdās depicted Sītā as a bashful 'Kula-Badhū'. Through Sītā he depicted the beauty of the woman.15 The best example of such depiction is the beauty of Sītā at the time of 'Swayambhū'.16

Another best appearance of Sītā is her appearance as the 'devoted wife'. The arguments which Sītā put forward against Kaushalyā's objections on the eve of their 'Vanvās' showed clearly that Sītā was a devoted wife to Rām.17 Sītā was so devoted to Rām that even she did not trample on the footprints of Rām.18 She also took great care of Rām while they lived in the hut in the forest.

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14 Rāmcharit Mānas - 1/227/1.
15 Ibid - 1/229/3-4.
16 Ibid - 1/246/1-3.
17 Ibid - 2/63/3.
18 Ibid - 2/66/1.
According to Indian custom, a woman should take her meal only after offering meals to her husband. Tulsīdās has reflected this custom through Sītā's activities. This has been evident when 'Pāyās' was offered by Lord Indra to Sītā in the 'Ashok Van'. Sītā was a devoted wife and had her own exalted personality. The behaviour shown to Hanuman also proved her chastity. Her chastity has enormously been proved at the time of the 'Agni-Parīkṣā'.

Some dramatic consequences were created in the Rāmcharit Mānas during the appearance of Māyā Sītā. Because Sītā, who was abducted during the absence of Rām and Laxmana was not the real Sītā, but the Māyā Sītā. Tulsīdās did not want disrespect to womankind.

Tulsīdās has ascribed several divine qualities to Sītā and depicted them through different activities of Sītā like her lamentation while abducted by Rāvana etc. Her respectable behaviour to the members of the family after returning from the

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20 ibid, 5/12/4.
21 ibid, 6/108/2.
22 ibid, 3/22/2.
23 ibid, 3/28/1-4.
Vanavās, particularly her service to her husband is also worth noting.

**REMARKS:**

In both the books under consideration Sitā has depicted as the main heroine with rare qualities like devotion to husband, knowledge of the Šāstras, intelligence, firmness and selflessness etc. Both the poets illustrated the beauty of Sitā. Her beauty was expressed through the speeches of Rām and even through Shurpanakha:

- "Janu Virchi Sab Nij Nipunāi,
  Virchi Vishwa Ke ha Pragati Dekhāi.\(^{25}\)

Under such circumstances, it is found that there are similarities in the depiction of both the poets. But in certain places dissimilarities are also evident between their illustrations. For example, in Kandali’s Rāmāyana, there was no meeting of Rām and Sitā before their ‘Swayambar’ but in Tulaidāś’s Rāmāyana it took place.\(^{26}\)

Interestingly, in certain works of the 8th century like the Rāmkathā Varnān,\(^{27}\) Mahāvir Charit,\(^{28}\) Jānaki Haran,\(^{29}\) and the

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\(^{25}\) *Ibid* - 1/229/3.

\(^{26}\) *Ibid* - 1/229/1-2.

\(^{27}\) Ramkatha – Kamil Bulka, pp. 35.3.

\(^{28}\) Mahāvir Charit – Scene I.

\(^{29}\) Jānaki Haran – Saptam Sarg.
Rāmāyana of Kritirvās there are the description of mutual attraction towards each other and description of love affairs between them. In Kandali's Rāmāyana although love of Sītā for Rām come into being, it was only in the 'Swayamvara' and therefore it cannot be described as 'Purvaaraga'. Differences are also evident in depiction of the abduction of Sītā. In the Rāmcharit Mānas, Rāvana touched Sītā several times at the time of her abduction; while Kandali wanted to keep the sanctity of a woman and therefore did not allow Sītā to be touched by a 'Para-purush' of course Tulsidas's Sītā was only a form of the 'Māyā-Sītā' (Sītā's illusion).

In Kandali's Rāmāyana Shurpanakhā praised the beauty of Sītā which is absent in Tulsidas's Rāmāyana. Again in his Rāmāyana while Hanuman wanted to bring Sītā back on his shoulder, she refused because it was not possible for her to touch a male and other than her husband. But in case of Rāmcharit Mānas such illustrations are not found. Kandali has laid importance on the chastity of a woman through such

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30 Anand Rāmāyana - 1/3/111-120.
31 Saptā Kānda Rāmāyana, 1/1176.
33 Saptā Kānda Rāmāyana, 3/2/98.
34 Ibid. 5/4325.
activities.

Sītā was escorted after the death of Rāvana to Rām. In this case also Kandali has furthered the importance of Sītā because in his work Sītā was escorted by Vīabhishana surrounded with some *Devis* while she was escorted only by the guards in the Mānas. In Tulsīdās, Sītā was carried in on Palanquin while no such thing was used in case of Kandali.

According to Kandali Rām used harsh words to Sītā after bringing her back from Lankā, that he delivered her from Rāvana only because he wanted to get rid of the scandal and now he did not like to accept her. Therefore, she was free to go where she liked:

- "Tomāk Arilo Sītā Yathā Man Jāhān". 37

As a result Sītā entered into fire only to prove her chastity. In the Rāmcharit Mānas also it has been depicted that Sītā entered into fire; but it was the Māyā Sītā only. 39

35 Sapta Kānda Rāmāyana ; 6/6474.
36 Rām Charit Mānas - 6/107/4.
38 Ibid, 6/6511.
In Kandali's Rāmāyana, Rāvana was kept away from the touch of Śītā only due to some curses:

"Purba Kāle Shapi Ashe Nalthe Kubere.
Strī Bāle Dharib Mohor Swami Mare.\(^{40}\)

But in the Mānas no such curse has been indicated. Whatever it might be both the poets depicted Sītā as the heroine of their poetry.

4.5.2 Mandodarī:

Mandodarī, the wife of Rāvana who was the villain against Rām, is another symbol of ideal woman for the womenfolk. Mandodarī was born to fairy Hēmā who was given as a gift to Mūy, the Vishvakarma of the Asuras. Mandodarī attained marriagable age at her father's residence and then she was given to Rāvana in marriage.

Mandodarī was the fittest consort of Rāvana. Like Sītā service to her husband was her worship. Her devotion for her husband was matchless. She pleaded to freed Śītā when abducted only for the good of her husband. She knew the ultimate outcome.

\(^{40}\) Sapta Kānda Rāmāyana - 5/4214.
of the abduction of devoted Sita. For a common woman it is natural to be burnt with the thought of a co-wife. But, Mandodari, who was a liberal minded one, praised Sita rather than scolding her. Although she is the wife of Ravana, her place is not less important. She is also known for devotion to her husband like Sita.

The greatness of Mandodari's personality lies on her forebearance and her self-control. After the death of Ravana, she did neither accuse Rama nor Sita for that act, but she shed tears crying aloud the good qualities of Ravana. She accused her husband and her fate for the death of her husband. She as a wife, failed to convince her husband. In brief she was adored with all qualities of a good wife.

MANDODARI IN KANDALI'S RAMAYANA :

Mandodari came to the forefront only in the Sundarakanda. Kandali depicted the character of Mandodari as a devoted wife. He is successful in decorating this character as a symbol of idealism for a woman. One can just imagine the moral character of Mandodari from the advice she rendered to Ravana while Sita was imprisoned in the 'Ashok Van'. It was because she wanted not only the good of Ravana but of the people of Lanka at large.
When she failed to convince Rāvana, she reminded him of the former curse on him. 41

From the lamentation she made when Rāvana was dead, it is evident that she knew the divinity of Ram. 42 She proved her own qualities when she did not accuse others for the death of her husband. Only a devoted wife can praise another devoted wife.

- "Adharme Grasila Pativrata
Nari Hari". 43

With such lamentation of Mandodari Kandali referred to her devotion to the Lord. 44

Besides her devotion to her husband, she was also depicted as a loving mother to her children. The picture of her as a loving mother can be evidenced from her lamentation at the death of her sons Meghnād and others. On the other hand her wisdom can be evidenced from her thought for the good of Lankā even after the death of her husband, Rāvana. On

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41 Saptā Kānda Rāmāyana - 5/4214.
42 ibid. 6/6428.
43 ibid. 6/6430.
44 ibid. 6/6429, 6430.
the whole Kandali depicted Mandodari as a devoted wife, a lady with the knowledge of Shastras and with wisdom.

MANDODARI IN THE RĀMCHARIT MĀNAS:

Like Kandali, Tulsidas also depicted Mandodari as a devotee of Rām. She was a righteous, devoted and wise lady. She accepted the abduction of Sītā by Rāvana against her will. She prayed Rāvana again and again to send back Sītā. Because she realised that the result of such action would bring forth worse consequences. In reality she was wise and far-sighted. Knowing the divinity and greatness in Rām she told her husband that even Brahma and Shiva could not save him if he did not send back Sītā. She tried her best to convince her husband Rāvana, because she was a wise and devoted wife. When she failed to convince him, she consoled herself:

- "Bhayau Kant Par Vidhi Viparita".

That Rāvana could not cross the Laxman Rekha, Hanuman caused to burn Lankā, and destroy the Ashok Van, the death of Axay

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45 Rāmcharit Mānas : 5/36/3-4.
46 ibid - 5/35/5.
47 ibid : 5/36/3.
Kumar, the troubles met by Shurpanakhā, the death Khar and Dushana, the making of the 'Setu' over the seas etc. all proved the greatness of Rām and failure of Rāvana.⁴⁸ Mandodarī also knew that lack of foresight and farsight on the part of Rāvana was the cause of their extinction.⁴⁹ Even after the death of Rāvana, her lamentation expressed her devotion to Lord Rām⁵⁰ which ultimately proved the basic intention of Tulsīdās as to why he wanted to compose the Mānas.⁵¹

While lamenting for her husband, she said that the lord whom even Brahma and Śiva worship has been neglected by Rāvana as an ordinary human being. Against the enmity and neglect of Rāvana, Rām has granted the superior most 'Niz-dhām' for him. To what extent, Rām was great! He should be worshipped. The gods, the sages, the 'Siddha Tāpaswis' and even Lord Brahma and Lord Śiva delighted to hear her.⁵² At last, with the advice of Rām, Rāvana was cremated and all women including

⁴⁸ibid., 5/36, 37, 38, 39.
⁴⁹ibid., 5/37/3.
⁵⁰ibid., 6/103/3, 4.
⁵¹ibid., 6/36/1.
⁵²ibid., 6/104/1.
Mandodari went back to the palace. In the Ramcharit Manas, Mandodari was found living with Rāvana as husband and wife for which Tulsīdās had to face criticisms.

In this manner, Mandodari has been depicted in the Ramcharit Manas as a devoted wife, a woman with wisdom and with the knowledge of the Shāstras.

REMARKS:

Going through the works of the two poets under consideration, it is found that both of them depicted Mandodari from their own points of view. Kandali expressed the beauty of Lanka and the womanly beauty of Sītā through Hanuman's expedition in Lanka.

In comparison with Sītā even Mandodari was not lagging behind. Her devotion to husband can never be compared to that of either Tara or Sumitra. Because Mandodari's devotion was of high degree than theirs. Later although she became the wife of Vibhishana yet Tulsidās made us believe that Mandodari married

53 ibid., 6/105.
54 ibid., 1/28/4.
Vibhishana only because he was a worshipper of Rām and that she was also a devotee of Rām. Practically speaking Tulsidas wanted to prove the greatness of 'bhakti' and therefore, made Mandodari marry Vibhishana, a devotee of Rām. On the other hand Kandali depicted Mandodari as a widow in his Sāpta Kāndā Rāmāyanā; because he wanted to protect chastity of a woman. Of course in case of Tulsidas one cannot say that he had degraded womanhood by allowing Mandodari to remarry. Since Vibhishan recognised the illustrations 'Panch-kanya' and since Mandodari is one of them, the question of degrading her womanhood does not arise here. Further, Kandali referred to one previous curse on Rāvan, which is absent in the Mānas. It is a fact that both the poets depict Mandodari as a devoted wife.

4.6.1 **KAUSHALYĀ**

The depiction of the character of Kaushalyā, Rām's mother and the first prime queen of king Dāsarathā is very brief. Its illustration begins and ends in the 'Ayodhya-kāndā' only. Her whereabouts before the marriage with king Dasarath is not much known. She, therefore, is known as the queen of Dāsarathā. But she was wise, devoted to religion and was the symbol of a mother who loved her children. He had simplicity
pleasantness and purity in her character. Under no circumstances she was swept away by voluptuous instincts.

**KAUSHALYĀ IN KANDALI'S RĀMĀYANA:**

Like that in the original Rāmāyana, Kandali also confined the character of Kaushalyā in the Ayodhya Kānda. Her character became distinct at the time of Rāma's proceeding to 'Vanavās'. She was not very conscious of her own rights and as such she could not extend her influence over king Dāsaratha. The love for her son and religion were happily mixed up in her character, which is definitely the brighter side of her character. In Kandali's Rāmāyana, only some lamentation, some regrets and some religious performances constituted the character of Kaushalyā. The success of the love for her husband is not evident in the life of Kaushalyā. But Dāsarath realised in the end that he did not do justice to Kaushalyā by sending Rāma to the forest. Inspite of being a mother, she had to allow Rāma to go to the forest only to fulfil the words of his father:

- "Anicchāye Māvar Anujna
Rāme Pāīla".

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Kaushalyā compared her heart to iron; because it did not melt even when her only son was deserting her;
— "Mohen Hriday Bajra Lohaye Gahil". 57

Kandali Deva praised the patience, forebearance and wisdom of Kaushalyā through such descriptions. Although Kaushalyā could not enjoy happiness from her husband, yet she hoped to get happiness from her son which remained unfulfilled. 58 She, of course, used harsh words for Dasaratha only for her love for Rām:
— "Kāmbash Bāpar Bachan Parihar". 59

But Kandali expressed the primacy of a man over women, for which Kaushalyā had to come to the feet of Dasaratha at last:
— "Khamiyaka Prabhu Buli Charane Dharila". 60

With such statements, Kandali wanted depict Kaushalyā as a devoted wife. Since she was a devoted wife, she regreted

57 ibid ; 2/1728.
58 ibid ; 2/1780.
59 ibid ; 2/1789.
60 ibid ; 2/2140.
afterwards for rebuking her husband:

- "Pratrar Sholcat Sinohte Mor Man, Prabhu Bulilo Tāte Lāghab 8achan". 61

Under such circumstances, one can find that Kandali, following the trend of the original Rāmāyana, depicted Kaushalyā as a "Tyāgi, Dharmaṇā and Jnāni" woman.

KAUSHALYĀ IN THE RĀMCHARIT MĀNAS:

The salient feature of the character of Kaushalyā in the Rāmcharit Mānas of Tulsiṇās is her incredible patience. She wanted that under no circumstances her husband and son would not give back to their duties. Kaushalyā was the best among the three queens in the Mānas. It was evident during the 'Putresti Yajna'. 62 Moreover, Tulsiṇās recognised Kaushalyā as the incarnation of 'Shatarupā'. 63

Tulsiṇās has depicted the character of Kaushalyā as an idol of purity, chastity, patience and spiritual wisdom. As

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61 ibid ; 2/2141.
62 Manas ; 1/181/1.
63 ibid ; 1/1222/2.
a 'Putra-vatsalā' (a loving mother) woman it was natural for her to desire for the good of her daughter-in-law. She was happy with the news of Rāma's coronation ceremony and was unhappy with the 'Vanavās'. On the other hand, Kaushalyā regarded duty as a part of religion and therefore, she allowed Sītā to accompany Rāma to forest. Tulsīdās has narrated a good picture of internal conflicts of Kaushalyā between 'duty' and 'consciousness'. Kaushalyā is found to be depicted as very much patient. He also depicted the 'Karmafal' through Kaushalyā:

- "Tajio Vishādu Kaal Gati Jaani".

It can be concluded that Tulsīdās depicted Kaushalyā as an ideal mother and thereby he gave a high status to Indian women.

**RÉMARKS**

Now, much difference between the characters of Kaushalyā in the works of both the poets are not evident. In the Rāmcharit Mānas Kaushalyā has been ascribed as the incarnation of

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64 ibid : 2/54/ 1-4.
65 ibid : 2/56 and 2/56/ 1.
66 ibid : 2/54/ 1-2.
67 ibid : 2/68/4.
68 ibid : 2/175/1.
Shatarupa. But such references are absent in Kandali's work. Moreover, what Tulsidas showed about Kaushalya as duty bound and her internal conflicts between duty and her consciousness are not found in the case of the Saptakanda Ramayana. But both of them followed the original Ramayana in this regard.

Finally, it is found that both the poets have depicted Kaushalya as an ideal mother, impartial, wise and ideal housewife which is definitely to be respected by the women folk.

4.6.2 KAKEYEE:

Kaikseyee was one of the three principal queens of king Dēsaratha. She was so named because she was the daughter of the king of Kekaya. But no elaborate description is available as regards to her marriage with Desaratha. Her name has been referred to when the 'Pāyas' of the 'Yajna' was distributed among the three queens of Desaratha. At the beginning she was attributed with all the best qualities of a woman and was respected by all; but during her later part of life. She became the name of disgrace to womenfolk and a term of abuse.

After Sītā, Kaikseyee is the most remarkable character in the Rāmāyana. Because the actions of Kaikseyee shaped the course of actions in the Rāmāyana. As she was the immediate
cause of Rām's Vanavās, she became the matter of hatred even for her son, Bharata. It is found that there is mixture of good and evil in her character. For such evil intentions of Kaikeyee, Tulsīdās accused 'Saraswati' and Kandali Mantharā. Whatever it might be the character of Kaikeyee helped the poets to carry their story further. It was Kaikeyee for whom incidents like Rām-Vanavās, Sītā-Haran Lankā-Dāhan, Rāvana-Badh etc. took place.

**KAIKEYEE IN KANDALI'S RĀMĀYANA**

Kaikeyee in Kandali's Rāmāyana is very much similar to Kaikeyee in the original Rāmāyana of Vālmiki. But from the point of crookedness Kandali's Kaikeyee is much more than Vālmiki's Kaikeyee. Her crookedness came to light from the speeches of Bharata.

Prior to the coronation of Rām, Kaikeyee was very liberal and sincere to both Dēsārath and Rām. At first, she did not pay any heed to the information of Rām's coronation and the crooked twisting of it by Mantharā, the maid servant.

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69 Sapta Kanda Ramayana - ; 2/2483.
70 ibid; 2/2277.
Moreover, Kandali has represented the motherly form of a woman through Kaikeyee very well. Through her he tried to depict the love for a son of the woman and sacrifice of oneself for the son. But the evil influence of Mantharā on her proved her lack of personality. 72

On the other hand Kandali has presented one unnatural picture of Kaikeyee's remorse. When Rām returned after the end of the Vanavāś, Kaikeyee also proceeded along with others to welcome Rām; but with a heavy heart. She had a crooked intention in her heart of hearts:

- "Manat Bishād Bar Bhai La Kaikeyeer". 73

Kandali also depicted Kaikeyee as a devoted wife who nursed her husband at any cost and as a loving mother. 74 But

71ibid : 2/1581.
72ibid : 2/1589, 1602, 1603.
73ibid : 6/6632-33.
74ibid : 1/433, 2/1597.
Kaikayee in her later part of life represents the real picture of womankind.

**KAKEYEE IN THE RAMCHARIT MANAS**

In the Ram Charit Manas also, the reference to Kaikayee as the mother of Bharat and the second queen of Dasaratha has been found in the incident of the distribution of 'Payas'. This Kaikayee was at the beginning a humble, devoted to her husband and a loving mother. But with the evil instructions of Manthara, she reminded Dasaratha of his former two boons granted to her, and with the help of these boons she prayed now that Rām should be sent to the forest for fourteen years and that Bharat should be made king in his place. This made her a matter of hatred and proved her to be an evil woman. Tulsidas accused Saraswati and other gods for this incident. Whatever it might be that Tulsidas has developed the subject matter of his 'Kavya' with the help of Manthara and Kaikayee who were influenced by Saraswati, can never be denied.

In the Ramcharit Manas, on one hand as Kaikayee was depicted as liberal minded, beautiful, and loving mother and

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75 Ramcharit Manas; 2/14/4.

76 ibid; 2/12.
a loving wife, on the other hand she has been depicted as cruel, obstinate, sinful and low-minded. But at the same time the poet was successful in proving Rām as the saviour and the incarnation of the Lord; and was able to preach the divinity in Rām.

Tulsidas is more liberal to Kaikeyee than Kandali. Throughout the 'Rām-Kāvyas', Kaikeyee is such a character where there is a conglomeration of praise and abuse. A self contradiction of woman nature has been found in the character of Kaikeyee.

It is also true that had there been no Kaikeyee, there would have no importance of other characters like that of Rām, Bharat or Laxmana. So, Laxman bowed with respect before Kaikeyee after returning from the 'Vanavās';

— "Kaikeyee, Kanha Puni Puni Mile
   Man Kar Chhocho Na Jāy". 79

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77ibid : 2/41.
78ibid : 2/249-50.
79ibid : 7/6(Kha).
Because it was Kaikeyee for whom Laxman got the chance to serve Rām and kill Indrajeet and other Räxsasas.

Rām of Tulsidās was very much liberal to Kaikeyee:

- "Dosu Dehi Jananihi Jarn Tsi".80

Tulsidās himself was also very liberal to Kaikeyee81. The poet who praised Kaikeyee for her good qualities, did not care to rebuke for her evils. But the poet is very successful in depicting the psychology of a woman.

REMARKS:

Both the poets, Kandali and Tulsidās did not hesitate to show both the sides of Kaikeyee's character good and evil. Kaikeyee represents the natural envy of a woman. Both the poets did never hesitate to depict this virtue in Kaikeyee. Here in we find complete similarity between Tulsidās and Kandali in this regard.82

Like Kandali,83 Tulsidās also accused the woman kind on the basis of the misdeeds of Kaikeyee.84 In both the works,

80ibid : 2/162/4.
81ibid : 2/263/4.
82Sapta Kanda Ramayana : 2/2277.
83Sapta Kanda Ramayan : 2277-80.
84Ram Charit Manas : 2/161/2.
the 'Valkalas' were supplied to Rām, Laxman and Sītā by Kaikeyee. Kaikeyee had love and affection for Rām; but for the evil advice of Mantharā only she agreed to send Rām to 'Vanavās'. Tulsīdās also accused Saraswati and other gods for the change of Kaikeyee's mind.

In spite of all these similarities, there are certain dis-similarities also. In Kandali's Rāmāyana, Kaikeyee is not found to repent while in the Rāmcharit Mānas, she did it after being abused by her son, Bharata. She was also ashamed of her behaviour while Janak appeared in the Chitrakut hills.

In Kandali's Rāmāyana, the main cause of the change of Kaikeyee's mind is Mantharā while it is Saraswati. But finally it can be said that both the poets depicted the character of Kaikeyee with equal viewpoints.

4.6.3 Sumitā:

Sumitā, the third wife of Dasarath is known as the mother of Laxmana and Satrughna. The sage Vālmiki depicted

86 Sapta Kānda Rāmāyana : 2/1602.
87 Rāmcharit Mānas : 2/12/4.
What Laxmana was to Rām, Sumitra was to Kaushalyā. She lived as if she was the shadow of Kaushalyā and shared all happiness and distress equally with her. She was as great as Kaushalyā and was adored with all good qualities like wisdom, open and liberal minded, affectionate etc. The writers have given very short time in their poems for Sumitra. She appeared before the readers only for a very short time. The impact of the departure of Laxmana was not severe on her unlike that of Rām's 'Vanavās' on Kaikeyee which broke the latter's heart. Because the Vanavas was not ordered against Laxman; he wilfully accompanied Rām, his eldest brother. Moreover, after the departure of Laxmana Sumitra was not deprived of her association with her second son, Sātrughnā. Under such circumstances her pangs of separation from her son was a bit less than that of Kaushalyā. Whatever it might be, Sumitra is able to attract the attention of the readers with her limited scope.

SUMITRA IN KANDALI'S RĀMĀYANA ;

Like the other two queens of Dasaratha, Sumitra also appeared in the scene for the first time when the 'Jnjna Pāyas'
was distributed. Afterwards she has been introduced as the mother of Laxmana and Satrughna. Again, she was seen when Rām prepared for journey for ‘Vanavās’. She realised that her life was a success due to her son like Laxmana. 90

Kandali did not give the importance to Sumitrā’s character in the development of the ‘Rāmkathā’ so much which he gave to the character of Rām alone. But he depicted a good picture of the love and affection of a mother’s heart through Sumitrā. To Sumitrā ‘Dharma’ is more important than the separation of a son. She felt proud when Laxmana voluntarily decided to follow Rām to ‘Vana’. So she allowed Laxmana to accompany Rām without any doubts in her mind:

- “Sāfal Jiban Mor Kalyān Sādhilo,
  Kata Janma Punye Moi Hen Putra Pāilo.
  Uddhārili Banshak Sāmfal Utapati,
  Jyestha Bhāita Bhaila Tor Emat Bhākati”. 91

Such greatness in her character made Sumitrā brighter and more great.

SUMITRA IN THE RĀMCHARIT MĀNAS:

The character of Sumitrā in the Rāmcharit Mānas is quite similar to those of Vālmiki’s Rāmāyana as well as of

90 Sapta Kānda Rāmāyana ; 2/1956.
Kandali's Sāpta Kānda Rāmāyana. She appeared for the first time at the distribution of Vyāsā. Her character is quite brief like those of Sumitras in the Tulsidasas and the Kandali Tulsidas depicted Sumitras not only as wise and selfless but also as virtuous and a symbol of open-mindedness. The forebearance which she showed during the time of Rām's Vanavāsa along with the separation of her son Laxmāna, made Sumitras a symbol of a rare woman. Her speeches at the time of Laxman's departure proved the virtues of her heart and her broad-minded qualities. Royal pride and haughtiness is not evident in her character. She did not even hanker after the throne. She even did not know about the incident which led to the Vanabāsa of Rām. She came to know about it only when Laxman went to her to take leave of her. She was much surprised to know it; but did not lose her patience.

Her generosity and wisdom can best be evidenced when she advised Laxman on the eve of his departure to 'Vana' with Rām;

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92 Rāmcharit Mānas.
93 ibid ; 2/74/1,4.
94 ibid ; 2/7/2-3.
95 ibid ; 2/73/1.
Sumitṛā is found to be sincere to service and spiritual knowledge. Again when Laxman respectfully touched her feet after returning from 'Vanavāś', she gave her blessings, saying:

- "Rāma Charanā Rati Jānī".

Because for her, it is better for Laxmana to take shelter at the feet of Lord Rāma.

In the Rāmcharit Maṇās, the poet has depicted Sumitṛā as an ideal mother.

REMARKS:

Both the poets in their works under consideration made the character of Sumitṛā very brief. Of course they were loyal to Vālmiki's Rāmāyana. Both of them depicted Sumitra in four forms: ideal wife, ideal co-wife ideal mother and ideal step-mother. Humanitarian weaknesses have little place in the mind of Sumitṛā. When she first heard of Rām's 'Vanavāś', she was very much perturbed; but she won over these troubles with
her full forebearance, which proved that she was not only an ideal wife but an ideal mother also. All the advices, orders and blessings given by Sumitra were all based on spiritual principles. In practice, the poets wanted to show that the success of life lies in the devotion to Lord Rām. Although both the poets have certain similarities in illustration of Sumitra's character, yet certain dissimilarities also exist in between their depictions. According to Tulsidas when Sumitra first came to know about the verdict of Rām's 'Vanavās', she hit her forehead and accused Kaikeyee. But she contained herself knowing that it was an evil time for them. But in Kandali's Rāmāyana, Sumitra took the incident as ill fated and did not accuse anybody. Again, Tulsidas's Sumitra took the accompaniment of Laxman with Rām as fateful while Kandali's Sumitra did not think like that.

Finally, it is found that Sumitra excelled her personality in the midst of the common atmosphere of happiness and distress. Although her appearance was short-lived, yet within that short appearance she proved her excellent qualities like righteousness, forebearance and abandonment. Both the poets wanted to depict a picture of an ideal woman through Sumitra.

96 Rāmcharit Mānas : 2/73/2.
97 Rāmcharit Mānas : 2/73/2.
There are various stories about Mantharā, which are traditionally told. References of Mantharā are found in the Padma purāṇa, the Bengali Rāmāyana and the Uriyā Rāmāyana. She was very eloquent ⁹⁸ and revengeful. ⁹⁹ She was also known as the 'Kubjā' or Kuji (in Assamese). In the Adhyatma Rāmāyana, Saraswati on the request of the gods, made misapprehension in the mind of Kaikeyee with the help of Mantharā only to kill Rāvana by Rām. Whatever it might be, Mantharā was depicted as the Kubjā (or Kuji in Assamese) and the maid servant of Kaikeyee, who was given along with the dowries at the time of her marriage. What is narrated in the Adhyatma Rāmāyana about Mantharā that gods misapprehended the mind of Kaikeyee through Mantharā to get Rāvana killed is also found in case of Rāmcharit Mānas. Nothing is known about the parentage of Mantharā and her childhood. ¹⁰¹ The very term 'Mantharā' means "capable of diverting or deviating the rigid or firm minds". In the Rāmāyana Mantharā has proved the inner essence of her name by deviating the mind of rigid Kaikeyee.

⁹⁸ Valmiki's Rāmāyana ; 2/7/18.
⁹⁹ Kamba Rāmāyana ; Ayodhya Kanda.
¹⁰⁰ Valmiki ; Rāmāyana ; 2/7/10.
¹⁰¹ Ibid ; 2/7/1.
Shri Kandali did not illustrate Manthara in her various forms. She has been depicted as a maid servant sent by the parents of Kaikeyee. Kandali has depicted the natural virtues of a woman through Manthara. It is natural for Manthara to love her mistress. Therefore, she wanted that Bharat should be the king. She expressed her revengeful mind when she got the news that Ram was going to be coronated.\(^{102}\) She was able to change the mind of her mistress with irrefutable arguments.\(^{103}\) Ultimately she was victorious. Kaikeyee became the ultimate cause for the death of Dæsarakth, Vanavæs of Räm and the killing of Râvana. It is, therefore, found that Manthara is such a character with the help of which the writer successfully developed the story of his Râmâyana.

Tulsidäs has described Manthara as the 'Mandamati chéri' and the 'Ajas Petari' in the Râm Charit Mānas:

\[\text{\textit{Naam Manthara Mandamati Cheri Kaikayee Keri,}}\]
\[\text{\textit{Ajas Petari Tāhi Kari Goye Girā Mati Feri}}.\(^{104}\]

\(^{102}\) Sapta Kanda Râmâyana : 2/1572.
\(^{103}\) ibid : 2/1584.
\(^{104}\) ibid : 2/12.
Like that in the Saptakanda Ramayana, in the Ramcharit Manas also, Manthara, getting the information that the coronation ceremony of Ram was going to be held, could not contain herself and worked out scheme to make Bharat the king in place of Ram. But it is also significant that Manthara was under the spell of goddess Saraswati during this time.105 Kaikeyee abused her first; but her irrefutable arguments finally won the former, although at the beginning the former threatened even to cut off her tongue for speaking against Ram.106 Ultimately Kaikeyee began to regard Manthara as her only well-wisher.107 Tulsidas regarded Manthara as fore and far-sighted and therefore, made her advice Kaikeyee.108 It was a credit to Manthara that Kaikeyee, who first rebuked her, began to take her as the only well-wisher. Tulsidas depicted the revengeful woman lack of personality and consciousness with the help of Manthara.

In the Ramcharit Manas Manthara is a narrow-minded, scheming, low and quarrelsome woman.

REMARKS:

Manthara is a very important character in both the

105 ibid : 2/12.
106 ibid : 2/14/1.
107 ibid : 2/16.
108 ibid : 2/1613-4.
'Kāvyas'. Although both the poets depicted Mantharā as a bad character yet there are certain differences between them. In the description of Shri Kāndali, Mantharā after getting the information of Rām's coronation came to Kaikeyee who was sleeping;¹⁰⁹ but in the Rāmcharit Mānas she met Kaikeyee when she was awake.¹¹⁰

Again in the Rāmcharit Mānas, when Mantharā got the information she was burnt with the fire of revenge and wanted to find out some means within the night to stop the coronation.¹¹¹ But in the Sapta Kānda Rāmāyana she was not found to scheme it within the night.

In the Rāmcharit Mānas, Mantharā reported the matter weeping as if she was acting.¹¹² But Kāndali's Mantharā did not express herself in that way.¹¹³ Kāndali's Mantharā is more temerons than her counterpart in the Mānas. When at first, Kaikeyee did not yield, she used some irrefutable arguments to convince Kaikeyee;¹¹⁴ but Tulsīdās's Mantharā used soft

¹⁰⁹ Sapta Kānda Rāmāyana; 2/1572.
¹¹⁰ Rāmcharit Mānas; 2/12.
¹¹¹ Ibid; 2/12/2.
¹¹² Ibid; 2/12/3-4.
¹¹³ Sapta Kānda Rāmāyana; 2/1572-80.
¹¹⁴ Ibid; 2/1583-85.
and kind words to Kaikeyee. 115

It is found that both the writers used Mantharā in their 'Kāvyas' to develop the story. Because had there been no mis-apprehension in the mind of Mantharā, there would have been no Vanavās to Rām, nor the death of Dasaratha nor the abduction of Sītā and the death of Rāvana. That the womankind is covetous and selfish has been proved through the character of Mantharā by both the poets.

4. 6. 5. SHURPANAKHĀ;

Shurpanakhā is another character which is very important like that of Mantharā. As Mantharā caught hold of the opportunity of covetousness of Kaikeyee and caused Rām for 'Vanavās', so also Shurpanakhā made the way of Rāvana's death clear through his lasciviousness. The main cause behind the battle between Rām and Rāvana was Shurpanakhā although the general belief is that it was Sītā. Shurpanakhā was the sister of Rāvana and the wife of Viddujiḥbā. 116 She was so named because her 'Nakh's (nails) were very much similar to 'Shurpas' (winnowing fans);

115 Rāmcharit Mānas; 2/16/2.
The character of Shurpanakha is important from both historical and spiritual point of view. Her character has enough contributions to establishment of the greatness of Ram. Both the poets handled this character very carefully.

**SHURPANAKHA IN KANDALI'S RĀMĀYANA**

Shurpanakha came to the scene when Ram was in the Dandakāranya with Sītā and Laxmana. Shri Kandali depicted the character of Shurpanakha in a very lively and psychological way. In his poetry, Shurpanakha is a very clever, wellversed in witchcraft and very cunning woman. She could take a very beautiful form with the help of her witchcraft. So, she could attract the mind of Ram and Laxman with such an acquired beautiful form. Ram was compelled to believe that She was a fairy:

- *Kibā Aseswari Tumi Gandharbar Naari, Katāxate Tribhuban Mohibāka Naari*. ।

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117 Kamba Rāmāyan Aur Rāmcharit Mānas Ke Naari Patra, pp. 139.
118 Saptā Kānda Rāmāyana; 3/2300.
119 ibid; 3/2808.
She looked so beautiful that Rām took up her even for Goddess Pārvati and asked her where abouts. Shurpanākhā gave her introduction as the sister of Rāvana, Kumohkarna, Khar and Dushana to prove her greatness. When she was asked why did she came to Rām, replied:

- "Tomār Swarup Dekhi Huyā Gailo Bhol,
Sundar Badane Māgo Ālingana Kol". 122

Being disapplinted at the words of Rām, she approached Laxmana. But she was again disappointed and therefore she decided to kill Sītā. She immediately transformed into her own form and tried to devour Sītā. 123 As soon as she transformed and attacked Sītā, Laxmana cut off her nose and ears at the order of Rām. 124

Afterwards, she has been depicted as an ordinary woman. As her wishes were not fulfilled, she began to incite her brothers against Rām and Laxmana. As a result, Sītā was abducted and consequently Rāvana killed. With this the poets took the

120 ibid ; 3/2806-7.
121 ibid ; 3/2808.
122 Saptakānda Rāmayana ; 3/2808.
123 ibid ; 3/2830-31.
124 ibid ; 3/2835.
opportunity to sing the praise of Rām. In fact, after Mantharā, Shurpanakāhā helped the poets to develop their story.

**SHURPANAKHĀ IN THE RĀMCHARIT MĀNAŚ**

Like that in the Sapta Kānda Rāmāyana in the Mānas also Shurpanakāhā came to light only in the Aranya Kānda for the first time. Shurpanakā, the sister of Rāvana, has been depicted by Tulsīdēs as very complex, as dangerous as a female snake and well-versed in witchcraft. When she saw Rāma and Laxmana in the Panchabati forest, her lust began to increase;

- "Hoye Bikal Sak Manahing Na Rokī".  

She then transformed herself into a very beautiful maiden and prayed Rāma to marry her;

- "Māna u Anurup Purush Jagā Māhi,
Dekhaon Khoji Lok Tihu Nāhi,
Tānte Ab Lagi Rahion Kumāri,
Manu Mānē Kachhu Tumahi Nihāri".  

125 Rāmcharit Mānas ; 3/16/2.  
126 ibid ; 3/16/3.  
127 ibid ; 3/16/5.
Ram told her that he was married and asked her to go to Laxmana. Laxmana in his turn sent her to Ram. Shurpanakhā was tired of approaching one after another several times and therefore, changed her form into her original fearful appearance. When Sita was afraid of the dreadful appearance, Laxmana chopped off the nose and ears of Shurpanakhā.

Shurpanakhā then went to her brothers, Khar and Dhushana and asked them to revenge the wrong committed to her. After the death of the two brothers, she went to her another brother Rāvana and incited him against Ram and Laxmana. As a consequence, like that in Kandali's Rāmāyana several incidents like the abduction of Sītā, killing of Rāvana and spreading of the greatness of Rām etc. followed. The Shurpanakhā of the Rāmcharit Mānas was more conversant with principles and customs. She was successful in convincing Rāvana to do something against Rām.

REMARKS:

In both the 'Kāvyas' there are the descriptions of

128 *ibid* : 3/16/7.
129 *ibid* : 3/16/9-10.
130 Rāmcharit Mānas : 3/21/130.
senseless boasting of Shurpanākhā. She was burnt with revenge against Rām and as such she successfully incited her brothers Khar, Dushana and Ravana to take action against Rām, Laxman and Sīta. Her story ends there and towards the end of the Rām Kāvya no reference is found about her.

In both the Kāvyas she is found to be attracted towards Rām. No dissimilarity is found in the description of Shurpanākhā in them. Hardly there are certain slight differences are found about her.

In Kandali's description, Shurpanākhā was very angry and tried to devour Sīta; but in the Rāmcharit Mānas she transformed herself into a dreaded form.

In Tulsidas's description, she is found telling lies when she proposed to marry Rām; but in case of Saptā Kānda Rāmāyan she is not found doing such things.

In Kandali's Rāmāyan, Rām is found to be enchanted at the beauty of Shurpanākhā, but Tulsidas's Rām is not

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131 Saptā Kānda Rāmāyan : 3/2829.
132 Rām Charit Mānas : 3/16/10.
133 ibid : 3/16/5.
134 Saptā Kānda Rāmāyan : 3/2808.
found attracted by her beauty.

Finally it can be easily said that with minor differences in between them, they faithfully followed the character of Shurpanakha of Valmiki's Ramayana. Both the poets wanted to prove the divinity in Rām and therefore, found no importance in the character of Shurpanakha except that she helped in developing the story of Rām. They depict some traditional evil character in a woman through Shurpanakha.

4.6.6 SHABARI (SHAWARI):

Another important female character appeared in the latter part of the Aranya Kānda is Shabarī. She is the symbol of simplicity, order, impartiality and freedom from attachment. It is believed, as if this character was introduced only to infuse the sense of 'Shakti' in the mind of the reader. Shabarī lived in a beautiful hermitage by the side of Champāsarovar, flowers and other natural beautiful things did not decay at the impact of the sage Mātanga. She had a deep regard for Rām.

During the Vedic period, the term 'Shabar' referred to a particular caste of people. During the Ramayana period also it referred to a caste of people whose main stay was hunting. These people lived at the foothill of the Vindhās. They were
never touched by complexities of reformations and developments.

The traditional stories say that one sage-like Mahatma named this girl as Shramanā, who was born to a Shabarī family and who afterwards came to be known as Shabarī devoted to Rām. One can have the knowledge of this Shabarī caste from the Rāmāyana.

Although the character of Shabarī is very brief in the Rāmkathā literature, yet from the point of devotion to Rām, this character cannot be neglected. Shabarī is such a character whose impact is evidenced on the whole of Rāmāyana. Because through this character of Shabarī, the character of Rām becomes more shining. Even this character of Vālmiki's Rāmāyana has been redefined and re-written by different writers till the present days. Shabarī has found offering her half-eaten fruits to Rām which rather indicates the need for the reformation of blind faiths of the time.

In fact, the character of Shabarī is one of the main characters of the Rāmāyana, whose impact is evidenced throughout the whole of Rāmāyana.

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The character of Shabari in the Sapta Kanda Ramayana is much similar to that in the original Vālmiki Ramayana. The Pampa Savowar of Vālmiki has been called the Champā Sarowar by Kandali;

"Champār Bhitare Basi Āchhe Āk Siddha,
Nāmate Shabari Tāi Aati Bar Briddha". 136

Rām met Tāpāswini Shabari after the salvation of cursed handicapped "Kawandhī"

"Rām Laxmanaka Jaani Dinoy Swabhābe,
Nārāyan Jaanis Namī Dauro Pāwē". 137

Shabari worshipped Rām as the Nārāyana Himself. Her hospitality towards Rām proved her boundless reverence to Him. As a result of her "Rām-Bhakti", she got her salvation and went to Heaven in the divine chariot of Lord Indra, which proved her Bhakti and greatness. 138

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136 Sapta Kanda Ramayana : 3/3377.
Tulsidas also depicted the character of Shauari very much parallel to its counterpart in the Rāmāyana of sage Vālmiki. She herself expressed that she belonged to a low caste when she welcome Rāma:

- *Kahi Vidhi Astuti Karai Tumhari,*
- *Adham jati Main Jadmati Bhari.*

The hospitality shown to Rāma by Shauari made Rāma pleased very much. Although she described herself as the *Adham Te Adham, Adham Ati Naari, Tinh Manh Main Matimand Adhari.* — Yet Rāma was highly satisfied at her 'Bhakti' and preached the rare principles of the 'Navadhā Bhakti' to her. The knowledge of these principles made the way of Shauari to Heaven clear for her. Tulsidas did not refer to the incident of offering half-eaten fruits to Rāma. According to him Shauari offered *Ati Sundar Kand-Mul Fal* to Rāma.

Tulsidas is found to be successful in proving the divinity in Rāma through the services of Shauari when she

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139 Rāmcharit Mānas : 3/34/1.
140 ibid : 3/34/2.
141 ibid : 3/34/4.
attended and worshipped the lotus feet of Lord Rām.\footnote{ibid 3/35/5} Finally Shawari requested Rām to make friendship with Sugrīva and breathed her last and went to heaven.

REMARKS:

Shawāri came to light through the Rāmāyana literature. Although the character of Shawāri is very brief in both the 'Kāvyas', yet it has a very important place in the mind of the people for the reverence she showed to Rām. Both the poets are very much successful in developing their story through this character. The reverence which Shawāri had for Lord Rām made her character memorable and adorable.

The character of Shawāri can be regarded as the symbol of social and cultural unity. Both the poets successfully depicted the love and respect of low caste Shawāri to high caste person like Rām, which ultimately speaks of unity, cooperation and co-ordination among the different castes of people sought by both the poets. It is rather a high ideal for unity. One can realise the essence and greatness of reverence for the Lord from the story of Shawāri. The character of Shawāri is the example that even the idiotic person from a low caste can attain 'Moxa' (Salvation) through true Bhakti
Anusuyā appeared at the beginning of the Aranya Kānda. Rām arrived at the hermitage of the sage Atri as soon as they entered into the Dandakāranya. Here Sītā met Anasuyā the wife of the sage Atri. The poets divulged several secret things through the dialogue between Sītā and Anusuyā.

Valmiki depicted the spiritual wisdom of Anusuyā in his Rāmāyana. Anusuyā attained several good virtues like devotion, subduing of passions etc. through deep meditation. The term 'Anusuyā' means devoid of 'asuyā' i.e. a woman with a pure heart devoid of 'asuyā'. Moreover, it has another meaning as it comes from the origin 'Su' which means capacity to procreate. Anusuya who was devoid of 'asuyā' could create some novel things. Further, Anusuyā wife of the sage Atri had great importance from the point of spiritualism.

ANUSUYĀ IN KANDALI'S RĀMĀYANA;

After crossing the Chitrakut mountains at the beginning of the Aranyakānda, Rām along with Lāmxana and Sītā wanted to take rest in the hermitage of Atri at the Dandakāranya. Although there is a depiction of hospitality to
Rām by the sage, yet Shri Kandali laid more stress on the dialogues between Sītā and Anusuyā. Because through the dialogue between them, expression has been given to the qualities of chaste women and greatness of reverence to Rām. Anusuyā embraced Sītā to find her devotion to her husband with joy, and offered her ornaments with the blessings that her youth would never decay:

— "Anusuyā Shunilanta Sītār Bachan
Gīte chāpi Dharilanta Harshit Badan".  

What Anusuyā described to Sītā of a devoted wife is meant for the womenfolk to remind of their duties only.

Kandali has depicted the character of Anusuyā in a very much similar way to that of Vālmiki.

ANUSUYĀ IN THE RĀMCHAKIT MĀNAS:

Tulsīdās also followed Vālmiki while depicting the picture of Anusuyā. Of course, the repetition was avoided

143 Sapta Kānda Rāmāyana : 3/2641-43.
144 ibid : 3/2644-5.
145 ibid : 3/2647.
by Tulsidas in case of not telling the biography of Sītā before Anusuyā. The dialogue between Sītā and Anusuyā transformed his Rāmāyana into an 'Ādhyātmik' one. The advice rendered to Sītā by Anusuyā gave expression to the qualities of a devoted wife as well as the greatness of 'Ram Bhakti'. The reason for offering ornaments and divine cloth signified that she should remain ever-green, pure and ever-beautiful:

- "Divya Basan Ghusan Pahiraye Je Nīta Nutan Amal Suhāye". 146

It was, of course, not necessary for Anusuyā to give any advice to a devoted wife like Sītā. But it was the intention of the poet to give advice to the womenfolk through the dialogue between two chaste and devoted wives, Sītā and Anusuyā. Anusuyā spoke of the Pativrata Dharma:

- "Ṣunu Sītā Teva Nām Sumiri Naari Patibrat Karahing, Tahi Prāṇpriya Rām Kehio Kathā Sansār Hit". 147

In practice, Tulsidas advised the womenfolk through the character of Anusuyā.

146 Ramcharit Mānas : 3/4/2.
147 ibid : 3/5/Kha.
Some differences are evident in case of depicting the character of Anusuyā by both the poets. In Kandali's Rāmāyana, Anusuyā was told about the life story of Sītā; but in the Tulsidās it is absent. In the former version of Rāmāyana, Anusuyā finding Sītā a very chaste woman wanted to bless her, which Sītā refused. Then Anusuyā on her own account presented Vermillion, Chandan and divine cloths. Of course, the intention of both the poets was to preach the Naari Dharma and to bring greatness of Rām to light. It is interesting to note that Vālmiki introduced the Sītā- Anusuyā dialogue in the Ayodhya Kānda while the poets under consideration in the Aranya Kānda.

It is found that both the poets are successful in developing the main object of writing the Rāmāyana through this dialogue. Because, the duties of a woman have been narrated and the greatness of Lord Rām has been ascertained through the speeches in this dialogue.

Ahalyā, Draupādi, Kuntī, Tārā and Mandodarī have been regarded as the 'Pancha-Mahakanyas', the recollection of whose
Ahalyā was the wife of sage Gautam and mother of Shatananda, the priest of king Janaka. The term 'Ahalyā' stands for the beautiful. Because she was very beautiful, she was called Ahalyā. There are several traditional stories about Ahalyā, Gautam and lord Indra. Whatever they might be, Ahalyā is regarded as a chaste woman, although she had been changed into a piece of stone at the curse of sage Gautam. She has been declared faultless and Indra criminal in all the versions of Rāmāyana except the one of Vālmiki. The salvation of Ahalyā by Rām, projected Rām as a social reformer and saviour from misfortune and distress.

AHALYĀ IN SAPTA KĀNDā RĀMĀYANA:

Sri Kandali depicted the character of Ahalyā following the Rāmāyana of Vālmiki. She was the wife of the sage Gautom. The cursed Ahalyā got her salvation and was transformed into her previous form from her stone form by Lord Rām when he visited the hermitage of sage Gautom on way to Mithila with the sage Vishwamitra:

- "Shuni Rāme Shile Mātra Parashilā Pāw,
  Shāp Arāi Ahalyā Bhailanta Suddha Bhāu."\(^{149}\)

\(^{\text{i}}\)\(^{\text{bid ; 1/1067.}}\)
Now the sage Vishvamitra told Ram and Laxman about Ahalyā and how did Gautam cursed lord Indra there:

- "Jena Ānakshan Nakarasha Hena Dosh,
  Atikshana Chhindīā Parok Andakosh,
  Bihilo Shasti Tor Jehen Uehit,
  Brāhmānak Aro Jena Nakara Engit". 150

After that he also cursed his wife Ahalyā and made her a piece of stone. But he told her that her salvation would take place when Ram would incarnate. Gautam could have turned her into ashes; but as she did tell the truth, he forgave her for her guilt committed without knowledge;

- "Gautame Bolanta Michā Nāmātili Toi,
  Shāpi Tok Ahasma Aro Nakarocho Moi". 151

Ram bowed to Ahalyā when he came to know her identity. The all-knowing Gautom could know the salvation of Ahalyā immediately and rushed there and accepted Ahalyā and bowed to lord Ram.

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150 ibid : 1/1123-4.
151 ibid : 1/1135-6.
to lord Rām.

It is a fact that the Adi Kānda of the Assamese version of Rāmāyana was composed by Shri Mādhabdeva, and therefore, he showed the greatness of lord Rām through the story of Ahalyā. The story of Ahalyā is absent in other Kāndas of Rāmāyana. Whatever it is, the story of Ahalyā proved the importance of a chaste woman and the greatness of Rām. 152

AHALYĀ IN THE RĀMCHARIT MĀNAS:

In the Rāmcharit Mānas, the story of the great sage Gautom, Ahalyā, is very short. When Rām came back after killing Taraka Raxasi to Mithila, he found a big piece of stone. On being asked about the stone, sage Vishvamitra told him the story of Ahalyā and requested him to touch it with his feet. 153

Vālmiki did not give any description of Ahalyā; he simply referred to her only and to the curse of Gautom:

152 ibid : 1/1066.
Ahalyā secured her salvation at the touch of Rām. After salvation she worshipped Rām. She described herself as the Adham (low) Nāri and Rām the Saviour:

- "Main Naari Apāwan, Prabhu Jaga Pāwan Rāvan Ripu Jan Sukhdāi".155

The story of Ahalyā made the Rāmāyana a spiritual one.

Ahalya of the Ramcharit Manas regarded the curse of Gautom as a benediction since it made her able to meet lord Rām.156 She got the blessings of Rām and went to the 'patilocka'.157

REMARKS:

Since in the Sapta Kānda Rāmāyana, the Adi Kānd where the story of Ahalyā appeared was written by Shri Mādhabdeva

155 ibid : 1/120/2.
156 ibid : 1/120/3.
157 ibid : 1/210/4.
and not by Shri Kandali, as such it is not proper to discuss the matter here. But it is a fact that the two poets differ in case of the Ahalyā episodi. In the Rām Charit Mānas the Ahalyā episode is very brief and the union of Gautam and Ahalyā is not shown like that in the Sapta Kānda Rāmāyana.

Practically speaking, being influenced by the customs and usages of the middle ages, the poets did not find any fault against morality in the story of Ahalyā. Both the poets wanted to show the union of the Lord and His devotee so that its impact might fall on the society. The character of Ahalyā has been introduced symbolically only to reflect the greatness of Rām. Only the name 'Ahalyā' has been taken by both the poets to which they added their own ideas. Through this character the nature of moral standard of the then society has been reflected.

4.6.9; Tāraka:

Tāraka was the daughter of a 'Yaksha' named Suketa. She was the mother of Mārich and Subāhu. She was hard-hearted, oppressive, strong and dangerous. This evil doer and troublesome 'Yakshini' was the wife of Sunda, the son of Jambha. 158

158 Vālmiki's Rāmāyana; Sargas XXIV & XXV.
Tārakā IN KANDALI'S KĀVYA

The description of Tāraka in the Sapta Kānda Rāmāyana is rather elaborate. The troubles and oppression caused by Tārakā were elaborated through Vishwamitra. She has been depicted as very strong and healthy:  

- "Shāl Vrixa Sadriṣa Meliā Dui Bāhu,  
  Surjek Dhākibe Jen Khedi Jāi Rāhu".  

She transformed herself into a very huge shape and devour the Yogis’ and 'Tapasuis’ in the forest. The sage Vishuamitra, when took Rām and Laxmana with him to kill Tārakā told, then her stories. At first Rām and Laxmana did not agree to kill her because she was a woman. But the sage told them that to kill an oppressor whether male or female is not a crime. Then they killed Tārakā at the advice of the Guru. 

Since the Adi Kānda was composed not by Shri Kandali but by Shri Mādhabdeva, the question of comparing or elaborating the character of Tārakā which appeared in this

159 Sapta Kānda Rāmāyana ; 1/883.  
160 ibid ; 1/880-3.  
161 ibid ; 1/879.
Kānda is not proper here. Of course, the killing of Tārakā by Rām, enhanced the prestige of Rām which is the ultimate aim of the poet. 162

TĀRAKĀ IN THE RĀM CHARIT MĀNAS:

The description of Tārakā in the Mānas is very brief while going through the forest, the sage told Rām and Laxman about her who troubled the sages very much. As soon as she saw them, she rushed to them and Rām killed her with the help of an arrow. Rām treated her with pity and gave her 'Vishnupada'.

- "Chale Jāt Muni Dinhi Dekhāi,
Suni Tārakā Krodh Kari Dhāi
Ekahi Bān Prān Hari tināh,
Din Jāni Tehi Niz Pad Dinhā". 163

Tulsidāś finished the story of Tārakā in one 'Chaupāi'.

162 ibid : 1/887.
163 Rām Charit Mānas : 1/208/3.
In the Rāmāyana of Vālmiki she was named as 'Tātkā' while she is known as 'Tārakā' in the versions of Shri Kandali and Tulsīdās. There are more descriptions of Tārakā in the Sapta Kānda Rāmāyana than those in the Rām Charit Mānas. Here, the viewpoints of the poets are found to vary. Of course both the poets wanted to prove the greatness of Rām by showing that he killed such a dangerous and strong Rāxasī, Tārakā. Rām, who was the Lord in incarnation, came to the earth only to subdue the evil and to perfect the good:

- "Rāxas Badhībe Prati Bhailā Abatar
prathamate Rāme Prāh Laila Tārakār". 164

This was the victory of Rām over the enemies of the good. In the Asamiyā Sapta Kānda Rāmāyana, the poets wanted to project Rām as the most powerful man from his childhood. In the Rām Charit Mānas, although Tulsīdās also had the intention to reveal the greatness of Rām, yet he did not elaborated the story of Tārakā in his version.

In the Sapta Kānda Rāmāyan, Rām at first, refused to kill Tārakā because she was a woman and killed her only when

164 Sapta Kānda Rāmāyana ; 1/888.
the sage Vishwamitra advised him to do it. But in the Rām Charit Mānas such description is not there. Moreover, in the Kandali's version the sage Vishwamitra took both Rām and Laxmana with him while in Tulsidas's version there is the reference to Rām only. Tulsidas wanted to prove the greatness of Rām alone, and therefore, no importance is laid on the minor characters. Moreover, the delight of the gods at the death of Tārakā and the spraying of flowers (Puspa Vṛisti) over Rām was only found in the Asamiyā Saptā Kānda Rāmāyana which is absent in the Rām Charit Mānas.

Finally it is seen that both the poets are successful in depicting the greatness and divinity in Rām through the killing of Rāxaśi Tārakā.

4.6.10. TRIJATA:

Trijata appeared in the Sundarakānda. She has been depicted as the wisest and best among the Rāxaśis guarding Sīta in the Ashokvana in all the Rām Kāvyas. In different Kāvyas Trijata has been described in different ways. In

\[165\text{ibid : 1/879.}\]
\[166\text{ibid : 1/887.}\]
Valmiki's Rāmāyana, she has been depicted as old while she has been described as "Dharmajna Priyāvadini" in the Mahābhārata. According to Bhusan, she was the daughter of Vibhishana and according to Harihar Prasad. She was so named (Tri = three) because in her there were three qualities like devotion to Rām, well-behaved and wise. In the Kamba Rāmāyana, Trijata has been depicted as the daughter of Vibhishana and was truthful. So also, in the Rāmāyana Kāvin she was the daughter of Vibhishana.

Trijata has been respectfully depicted since she was the well-wisher of Sīta among the Rāxasinis. Almost all the versions of Rāmāyana, following Valmiki's original one, depicted Trijata as respectable.

**Trijata in Kāṇḍali's Rāmāyana**

Trijata has been depicted as the body-guard of Sīta in the Sapta Kānda Rāmāyana. Although she was a 'Rāxasi',

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167 Valmiki's Rāmāyana: 4/10/59.
170 ibid: Part VI, pp. 99.
171 Kamba Rāmāyana: 5/6/22.
172 Rāmāyana Mimāṃsa: Swami Karpātrijee, pp. 616.
173 Rām Charit Mānas & Sapta Kānda Rāmāyana.
yet she has been depicted as devoted to Rām and wise. Her devotion to Rām has been described through a dream.

- "Gosāik Dekhilo Moi Swapanar Hante,
  Sasāgarā Prithibik Āsay Gilante". 174

Although she was a Rāxasi by birth yet she was adorned with many good virtues. She had a deep love for Sītā;

- "Rakhilo Rakhilo Āai Shoy Parihar,
  Toher Durgati Gaila Prāy Durantar". 175

Sītā also regarded her as intimate one and trusted her.

Shri Kandali regarded Trijatā as just and lover of justice. Although she know that her whole tribe was facing extinction yet she favoured justice. She consoled Sītā at the time her distress;

- "Trijatār Swapnak Dhariyā Bimarish
  Dukhate Khānāk Devi Bhailanta Harish". 176

Trijatā who was the well-wisher of Sītā, knew her

174 Septa Kānda Rāmāyana : 4/4244.
175 ibid : 4/4243.
176 ibid : 4/4253.
greatness and advised the Rāxasinis to pray Sītā for their salvation.

It is seen therefore, that Shri Kandali illustrated Trijata as devoted to Rām, straightforward and lover of justice.

**TRIJATA IN THE RĀM CHARIT MĀNAS**;

Tulsidās also depicted Trijata as a devotee of Rām.
She had a great faith or Rām;

- "Trijata Naam Rācchasi Eka,
Rām Charan Rati Nipun Bibekā". 177

Trijata dreamt a deadly dream and therefore, she frightened the Rāxasis and made them come to the feet of Sītā;

- "Sitahi Sei Karahu Hita Apnā". 178

She dreamt that the whole Rāxasa tribe was going to be destroyed and that the troubles suffered by Sītā would come to an end very soon. 179 All the Rāxasis came to the feet of Sītā only because of her.

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177 Rām Charit Mānas : 5/10/1.
178 ibid : 5/10/1.
179 ibid : 5/10/4.
Trijātā was so virtuous that even Sītā addressed her as 'Mātri' (a mother). Tulsīdās depicted her as generous, devoted to Rām and beneficial to the children. Trijātā was sorry for the difficulties and tortures that faced by Sītā and consoled her with the narration of Rām's greatness.

During the battle, Sītā was suspicious of Rām's victory but Trijātā consoled her by telling her the dream in which she dreamt of Rāvana's death. So, it is seen that Tulsīdās depicted the character of Trijātā as generous, lover of children and devoted to Rām.

REMARKS:

Both the poets, Shri Kandali and Goswami Tulsīdās presented the character of Trijātā almost equally. She has been depicted as just, wellwisher of Sītā and a devotee to Rām. The impact of Trijātā is best evident over all the Rāxasis and even on Sītā also. She was the only female character who loved Sītā at Lankā.

\[180\] ibid : 5/10/4.
\[181\] ibid : 5/11/1.
\[182\] ibid : 5/11/3.
\[183\] ibid : 6/99/1.
In Shri Kandali's Rāmāyana, Sītā is not found addressing Trijatā as 'Mātā' while it is found in the Rām Charit Mānas, which has placed her at a higher status.\footnote{184}

In Kandali's Rāmāyana, the dream of Trijatā has been explained in a psychological way while Tulsīdās wanted to make the impact fall actively on the Rākṣasīs.\footnote{185}

The Trijatā of Tulsīdās was more intelligent than her counterpart in the Kandali. Tulsīdās's description as Trijata saying:

"Nisi Na Anal Mil Sunu Sukumāri".\footnote{186}

gives us the proof of her intelligence.

In spite of all these dissimilarities, it is found that both the poets depicted the character of Trijatā with the one and same intention. The ideal of devotion to nām has been reflected in her devotion to Sītā, her supply of secret information of Lankā etc.

4.6.14. URMILĀ :

Urmilā, who can be regarded as the living symbol of Indian culture, has not been given due importance by both

\footnote{184}{Rām Charit Mānas ; 5/11/1.}
\footnote{185}{ibid ; 5/10/4.}
\footnote{186}{ibid ; 5/11/3.}
the poets. Simply this character has been introduced in the Adikānda. From the Rāmāyana of Vālmiki it is known that Urmilā was the second daughter of Janaka and younger sister of Sītā. It is also found in his version that king Janaka has given her to Laxmana in marriage, but the fact that she bore the brunt of separation from her husband for long fourteen years was never referred to in all the versions of the Rāmāyana. The character of Urmilā in the versions of Rāmāyana by both the poets are very brief.

Urmilā in the Saptakānda Rāmāyana:

Like Vālmikī, Shri Kandali also did not by more stress on the character of Urmilā. Moreover the Ādi Kānda of this version of the Ramayana being composed by Shri Madhabdeva, Shri Kandali can never be accused for the neglect towards the character of Urmilā. Only Urmilā appeared in the Ādi Kānda at the time of the Swayambhara of Sītā along with Laxmana, Bharata and Shatrughna. After this nothing is

188Ibid. Rāmāyana : 1/73/30.
189Sapta Kānda Rāmāyana : 1/1351.
said about Urmila. Probably the poet neglected her only because he is very busy only in magnifying the personality and greatness of Ram. So, we find her as a very devoted wife and as having no individual identity.

**URMILA IN THE RĀMCHARIT MĀNAS:**

Urmilā in the Rām Charit Mānas has been introduced as the 'Laghu Bhagini' of Sītā;

- "Jānaki Laghu Bhagini Sakal Sundari Sirmoni Jaani Kai". 190

But the character of Urmilā is very brief. With the advice of sage Vashistha, Urmilā was dressed and decorated along with Maudavi, and Shrutkirti. Because she was very beautiful, she was married to Laxmana. Nothing more about Urmilā is found in the RāmCharit Mānas.

**REMARKS:**

The depiction of Urmilā's character is found to be very brief in the versions of both the poets. Most probably

190 Rām Charit Mānas : 1/324/Chand-3.
they did not find this character important for showing the greatness of Rām. But this neglected character is found to attract the attentions of many other poets.

The Bengali poet Rabindra Nath Tagore is the first poet of modern India who gave importance to the character of Urmilā. He depicted Urmila as the symbol of abandonment (i.e. Tyagamoyee) and a pitiable character in his poems. In modern Hindi literature also there are several Kāvyas on her. What Mahabir Prasad Dwivedy wrote in the article "Kaviyon Ki Urmilā Vishayak Udasinatā" in the Saraswati, Maitheli Charan Gupta in his Kāvyā, 'Sāket' and Balkrishna Sarma in his Khanda Kāvyā 'Urmilā' which all show the 'Tyāga' and devotion to her husband, proved rather clearly that the character of Urmilā is more bright than that of Sīta. The happiness which Sīta got at the union with her husband Rām in the 'Vanavās', was missed by Urmilā although she lived in the royal palace at Ayodhya.

4.6.12, MĀNDAVI AND SHRUTAKIRTI :

The poets also depicted the characters of Māndavi and Shrutakirti very briefly like that of Urmilā. Both of them were the daughters of Kushadhwaja, the brother of king Janaka, and were married to Bharata and Shatrughna. Probably
these two characters were also not found necessary to carry the story further and to prove the greatness of Rām; and therefore, they were confined to one 'Kānda' only.

MĀNDAVI & SHRUTAKIRTI IN SHRI KANDALI'S VERSION:

Since Shri Kandali's version is the translation of Vālmiki's original Rāmāyana, he did not give more attention to these characters of his own. Māndavi and Shrutakirti were introduced as the daughters of Kushadhwaja, the brother of king Janaka. Along with Śītā, who was married to Rām, both Māndavi and Shrutakirti were married to Bharata and Shatrughna respectively. Both of them are depicted as devoted to their husbands and therefore, as an ideal of womankind. Nothing more than this is known about them. Because the very aim of Rāmāyana is to show the greatness of Rām and as such the minor characters which cannot prove the greatness of Rām are neglected by the poets in their 'Kāvyas'.

MĀNDAVI & SHRUTAKIRTI IN THE VERSION OF TULSIDĀŚ:

Like that in the Sapta Kānda Rāmāyana, these two characters are also neglected in the version of Tulsidāś. At

191 Sapta Kānda Rāmāyana ; 1/1351.
the advice of the sage Vasistha, these two were also
married Māndavi to Bharata and Shrutakirti to Shatrughna
at the time of Sita's 'Sayamvara'. In the description
of Tulsidās, there are beautiful depictions of the beauty
of a woman while introducing these two characters.

**REMARKS:**

Urmilā has been found to be neglected by both the
poets under consideration. Both of them respected the
Indian customs and tradition that a daughter should be
given in marriage at proper age; and therefore these two
daughters were married along with Sītā since they attained
marriageable age.

They were so neglected that Shri Kandali even did not
care to indicate with whom they were married. Only there is
the reference to their marriage in his version;

- "Sītā Satī Urmila Māndavi Shrutakirti
  Chāriro Mangal Ācharilā Sāvahiti". 194

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193 ibid : 1/324/Chand 3-4.
194 Sapta Kānda Rāmāyana : 1/1351.
But Tulsidas mentioned who was married to whom. Whatever it might be, in spite of all the brief accounts about them, both of them shine as chaste and devoted wives and remain as a symbol of ideal woman. Of course it is necessary that independent 'Kavyas' are aught to be composed on these two neglected characters like that of Urmila's.

4.6.13. Tārā:

Tārā, the wife of Bali, is a very important character in the 'Kiskindha Kanda'. Both the poets established Tārā as the best representative of the female kind of the monkey tribe in their Kāvyas. Tārā was devoted to her husband and to Rām.

TĀRĀ IN KANDALI'S RĀMĀYANA:

Shri Kandali has given a very high status to Tārā as a woman. Shri Kandali has faithfully followed the original Rāmāyana in case of depiction of Tārā's character. He did not drag her into political issues but depicted her as a devoted wife.

195 Rām Charit Mānas; 1/123/Chand 2–3.
Tārā realised the greatness of Rām and that he could do anything for the sake of his devotee even it might be regarded as injustice or wrong.

Shri Kandali is found to illustrate the social environment of the time through the character of Tārā. After the death of Bāli, Tāra is found to describe the qualities of a chaste and devoted wife who are without ornaments and vermillion:

-Shikhar Sindur Mor

Masailāhā Prabhudeva,
Rāj jogya āno Alankār,
Patibratā Nāri Huiyā
Kena Mata Rahiboho,
Mahādukh didhabār Bhārā. 198

Since she was a devoted wife, she even did not care to curse Rām. 199

196 Sapta Kānda Rāmāyana : 4/3664.
197 ibid : 4/3594.
198 ibid : 4/3658.
199 ibid : 4/3667.
- "Jena Maro Hera Swāmir Biyoga, 
Tomāk Banchiba Sītā Devir Samāhoge".

It shows that the poet was successful in depicting the greatness of Rāma through the episode of Tara advising Bāli not to fight with Sugriiva who was supported by Rāma. Finally, it can be said that Shri Kandali put Tārā before the readers very successfully as a chaste, virtuous and devoted wife who left an ideal for the womankind.

**TĀRĀ IN RĀMCHARIT MĀNAS OF TULSIĐĀSJEE:**

Tulsidās illustrated Tārā as a wise and great woman. She realised that there must be some great power behind the challenge of Sugriiva and therefore, she advised Bāli not to fight against Sugriiva. Even Rāma himself realised Tara and therefore, called Bāli as the culprit as he did not comply with the request of Tārā:

- "Murh Tohi Atisay Abhimānā, 
Naari Sikhāwan Karesi Na Kānā". 202

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200 ibid ; 4/358.
201 Rāmcharit Mānas ; 4/14/1.
202 ibid ; 4/8/5.
Rām advised Tārā, who was distracted at the death of her husband and did away with the errors caused by her illusion. Finally she received the boon of 'Param Bhakti' from Rām.

Tulsīdās also expresses the greatness of Rām through Tārā who was a great devotee of Rām.

**REMARKS**

Although both the poets depicted Tārā as a devotee of Rām, yet there are certain minor differences between their views.

Tulsīdās showed Tārā as marrying Sugriba after the death of Bāli, while Shri Kandali depicted her as a widow which gave a high status to a woman and set him outside the criticisms of the readers. Tulsīdās became the matter of criticism for depicting Tārā in that way. She has been regarded as one of the great 'Panch-Kanyā' and his intention was to show the union of two great devotees of Rām, Sugriba and Tārā.

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203 *ibid* : 4/10/2.

204 *ibid* : 4/10/3.
Kandali's Tārā is found to curse Rām which is not found in the Rām Charit Mānas. In Kandali's version, Bali accused himself of disrespecting her advice:

- "Bipāṅge Marilo Tor Bachan Nadhari". But such incidents are absent in the version of Tulsidās.

In Tulsidās's version, Tārā received the boon of 'Param Bhakti' from Rām for her devotion to him while no such incident is referred to in Kandali's version.

Finally it can be said that in spite of some minor difference both the poets depicted Tārā as amalgamation of several great virtues. She was a great woman for both of them. But they have depicted her in accordance with the environments of their own.

4.6.14. Saramā AND OTHER MINOR FEMALE CHARACTERS:

Another female character, Saramā appeared in the Lankā Kānda. Saramā the wife of Bīshainā, was devoted to

205 Sapta Kānda Rāmāyana ; 4/3665.
206 ibid ; 4/3645.
207 Rāmcharit Mānas ; 4/10/3.
Rām. She was also shown as a well-wisher of Sītā. When the 'Māyā Shir' of Rām was shown to Sītā, She consoled her thus:

- "Swāmi Tor Gunawanta Shrimanta Mahant,,
  Santak Pālanta Jata Asanta Nāshanta". 208

This statement of her shows that she was devoted to Rām. Because wife of Bibhishana, Saramā could realise the greatness of Rām, a place of importance has been given to her.

Shri Kandali has depicted Saramā as devoted to Rām and to her husband. 209 Because she was devoted to Rām, Sītā could tell her mind to her:

- "Akalār Bandhu Jen Sodar Bahini,
  Mor Hit Chinti Bidhi Milāilek Anī". 210

Saramā becomes praiseworthy by helping Sītā at the time of her distress. Although she was in the midst of the Rāxasīs yet she did not forget her own duties.

208 Sapta Kānde Rāmāyana ; 6/4950.
209 ibid ; 6/4950-2.
210 ibid ; 6/4956.
In addition to Saramā, Kanoāli introduced some Rāxasis like Hoymukhi, Bakranukhi and others and fairies like Gandhak Kāli, Bidyadharī and others in his Kāvya. But in the Rāmcarnit Mānas no other minor female character appeared except Saramā. Both the poets depicted the character of Saramā as the well-wisher of Sītā.

4.7 Conclusion:

The Sapta Kānda Rāmāyana as well as the Rāmcarnit Mānas followed the tradition of the original Rāmāyana in depicting the female characters. Both the poets, like the sage Vālmiki, reflected the then social values, traditions, the place of women in male-dominanted society, the realisation of a woman and the relevance of human life. Both of the poets did not find any characteristic differences between Sītā and Mandodarī, although there were differences between their environment and the character of their husbands. Both of these two women, did not retreated from their common virtue of devotion to their husbands. Finding her husband Rāvana going astray, Mandodarī warned him at every step which enhanced the ideal of womanhood in her.

Both the poets also tried to prove the virtuousness of the life of a woman through the dialogue between Amūsuyā,
wife of the sage Atri and Sītā. In case of other minor female characters, both the poets successfully narrated the features in them within a very limited scope. In this connection the names of Kaushalyā, Sumitrā, Ahalyā, Tījatā, Sāramā and Tārā etc. may be worth-mentioning. Any woman character who wanted to cross the dignity of a woman became the matter of slander. The names of Kaikeyee, Māntharā, Shurpanakhā etc. are the glowing examples of such cases. But a woman of low caste like Shabari and a Kāxasi like Tījatā became honourable due to their 'māmonakti' and their own dignity.

Finally it can be easily concluded that both Shri Kandali and Goswami Tulsidās are quite successful in depicting the woman characters in their creations. Both of them successfully depicted the bright sides of the woman characters on the basis of the values of the then society.