



## **The Antis of Indian Mythology** **M. Geetha<sup>1</sup>, Dr. K. Saraswathy<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, Department of English, BIHER

<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor & Head, Department of English, Bharath School of Arts & Science

**Abstract-** Indian children in every household grow up listening to stories rooted in Indian tradition and mythology. Indian mythology is a rich and diverse tapestry of stories and characters. Whether protagonists or antagonists, the characters always vividly impact the listeners. While the protagonists often are quoted as model beings who carry ethics, morals and righteousness, the antagonists in Indian mythology are frequently intricate and complex characters with unique drives and backstories. This article will explore some of the most notable Indian mythological antagonists, namely Ravana, Hiranyakashipu, Duryodhana, Shakuni, Kamsa, Mahishasura, and Soorapadma. This article will examine the characters' motivations, story roles, and enduring significance in Indian culture. This will also discuss how Indian mythological antagonists have been portrayed and interpreted over time. Some of these characters have been viewed as purely evil in nature; others have been viewed with more compassion and consideration. Eventually, the Indian mythological antagonists present us with a broader view and intricate lens through which we can explore the composite ways of good and evil, the effect of giving in to temptation, and the resulting conditions.

**Keywords-** Ravana, Duryodhana, antagonist, Indian mythology, epics.

### **I. Introduction**

Indian children in every household grow up listening to stories rooted in Indian tradition and mythology. Indian mythology is a rich and diverse tapestry of stories and characters. Whether protagonists or antagonists, the characters always vividly impact the listeners. While the protagonists often are quoted as model beings who carry ethics, morals and righteousness, the antagonists in Indian mythology are frequently intricate and complex characters with unique drives and backstories. This article will explore some of the most notable Indian mythological antagonists, namely Ravana, Hiranyakashipu, Duryodhana, Shakuni, Kamsa, Mahishasura, and Soorapadma.

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#### **Ravana: The Complex Asura King**

One of the most iconic antagonists in Indian mythology is Ravana, the Asura king of Lanka. Ravana is renowned mainly for his role in the ancient epic, the Ramayana. He



is multi-layered, personifying a mix of likeable and deplorable qualities. These make him a fascinating character in this mythological tale.

On one hand, Ravana is depicted as a remarkably gifted intellectual. He is well-versed in the Vedas, scriptures and Puranic texts. He showcases his deep understanding of philosophy and spirituality. This rational prowess sets him apart from many other characters in the Ramayana. Additionally, he is a staunch devotee of Lord Shiva. His dedication is painted through his intense penance, which earned him numerous boons from Lord Shiva, granting him massive power and impregnability. This spiritual aspect of his character highlights that he is not any ordinary villain but a symbol of a rich spiritual life.

Additionally, Ravana is known for his musical flairs. He is often depicted as a skilful musician, capable of playing the Veena, a traditional string instrument. He is also known to be the creator of the Ravana Veena, a special instrument made out of single wood. The Ravana Veena is said to be highly resonating. His love for music shows his artistic side, adding layers to his character beyond the archetypal image of an Asura king. Thus, Ravana is more of a figure of fascination, as they disclose that he possesses qualities often well-regarded in heroes.

However, his character's list of significant flaws mars it. His egotism and avid desire for power led him down a path of annihilation. Ravana's complexity lies in this duality. While he displays potential that can be admired, such as intellect, piety, and ingenuity, his darker desires ultimately define his role as the antagonist in the epic.

#### **Hiranyakashipu: The Tale of Immortality**

Hiranyakashipu is a central figure in Hindu mythology and the antagonist in the story of Prahlada. He is known for his intense devotion to gaining immortality and his conflict with his son, Prahlada, a staunch devotee of Lord Vishnu. The story of Hiranyakashipu illustrates the consequences of unchecked ego and the power of unwavering faith.

#### **Duryodhana: The Enigmatic Prince**

Duryodhana, from the epic Mahabharata, is a character who elicits mixed feelings. He is the crown prince of the Kauravas and a rival to the Pandavas. Duryodhana is often seen as a symbol of greed, envy, and unrighteousness. However, his unwavering determination and complex relationship with his cousins make him a character worth exploring.

#### **Shakuni: The Mastermind of Deceit**

In the Mahabharata, Shakuni, the maternal uncle of the Kauravas, is a cunning and manipulative antagonist. He is the puppeteer behind many of the devious schemes that lead to the great Kurukshetra War. Shakuni's ability to manipulate circumstances and sow discord makes him a fascinating character study.

Kamsa: The Tyrant King of Mathura



Kamsa is a key antagonist in Lord Krishna's life story. He is Krishna's maternal uncle and the ruthless king of Mathura who seeks to eliminate Krishna, fearing a prophecy that foretells his downfall at Krishna's hands. Kamsa's actions and tyranny serve as a backdrop to Krishna's divine mission.

#### **Mahishasura: The Buffalo Demon**

Mahishasura, a demon able to change forms, is a prominent antagonist in the *Devi Mahatmya*, a text dedicated to the goddess Durga. His battle with the goddess symbolizes the eternal struggle between good and evil, and his defeat signifies the victory of divine femininity over malevolent forces.

#### **Soorapadma: The Unchallenged Demon**

Soorapadman was born to a demonic rishi and a princess. He grew up displaying all the typical qualities of a demon. However, he was a staunch devotee of Lord Shiva. He prayed reverently to Lord Shiva, who granted him a boon that no one except Shiva's child, born without His union with a female, could either kill or defeat him. Thus, the demon became very powerful. He tortured several sages, imprisoned the elemental Gods, tormented them mercilessly, and ruled over the three worlds.

#### **Conclusion**

Indian mythology is a treasure trove of fascinating characters, and its antagonists are no exception. These characters, with their multifaceted personalities and moral complexities, serve as mirrors to human nature and the eternal battle between good and evil. Exploring the stories of these antagonists allows us to delve deeper into the cultural and philosophical aspects of Indian mythology, offering valuable insights into the human condition and the timeless lessons embedded in these narratives.

#### **References**

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