

Demystifying Shiva Myth in Works of Devdutt Pattanaik and Amish Tripathi: An Indigenous Study

Seema Devi¹
Ph. D. Research Scholar
Tantia University D. A. V. College
Sriganganagar

Dr. Sarla Singla²
Assistant Professor
D. A. V. College
Sriganganagar

Abstract

India, an epitomized land of knowledge is a storehouse of rich cultural heritage. Literature, being the most creative discovery of man, carries this responsibility of forwarding facts and myths amalgamated with fantasy to the next generation. This process of myth making was initiated from oral tradition and culminated in archetypal studies. Myth is essentially a rich and thriving cultural resource with which people are actively re-engaging. Amish Tripathi, Devdutt Pattanaik, Ashwin Sanghi, Ashok K. Banker and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni - this celebrated band of mythological writers is marching well equipped with the rock-hard research and gripping writing style to demystify the prevalent myths. They are dusting off the cob-web of Indian cultural traditions and myths. Shiva, an enigmatic figure is demystified and symbols related to Him are dexterously decoded by Devdutt Pattanaik and Amish Tripathi. Innumerable myths of Shiva are resolved and illuminated with reference to its locale version. The present paper is an effort to study demystification of myths related to Shiva of Devdutt Pattanaik and Amish Tripathi in an indigenous mode. His blue throat, Trident, His Third eye, Aum, Ganas, Halahal, Snow clad mountain that enwrap persona of Shiva are elucidated. In this era of demythologization and re-mythologization, myths of Shiva are studied in new perspective. Shiva arose as cool-hot dude in Amish and high philosopher of life in Devdutt. Modern trends of guide-by-slide, sage-on-stage and digital humanities have drastically transformed mask of myth from Nagamandala times to Shiva Trilogy.

Keywords: Neo-colonialism, Trajectory, Mythology, Indigenous, multilayered.

Everything is compiled in circle in nature. A phenomenon from where it gets started finds its end too. Indian heritage is such a grand repository that it gets never diminished. From colonial, post-colonial to neo-colonialism, it always gets connected to roots. Today in age of digital-humanities and on-line sources man is still guaranteed to his roots. In such pandemic of corona when everyone is losing

hope, its only Ayurveda which is the most unswerving source for every Indian. In the extreme juncture of technology, man on one hand is wandering in the wasteland and watching

“He who was living is now dead
We who were living are now dying” (Eliot 325-330)

But on other side, he is allured towards mythological writings. New emerging trend of mythological reading is the limelight of today and shows a quest for indigenous search. ‘Neo-colonialism’, a term used by Dr. Nayyar in the conference organized by Dyal Singh College, Karnal, Haryana on the topic Colonial to Postcolonial: A Trajectory of Literatures from the Indian Subcontinent in April 2021 proves the fact that some ideology never deceases, with flow of time it just evolves and changes the outer shape. But this trend has a positive side also, it boosts love for indigenous history and myth in man. So Indian myths are studied in a transformed perspective. Present warriors of myths are not detecting it from the veil of western lenses. They are cognizant of rich roots and cultural heritage of India. Indian deep-rooted myths are taken by contemporary writers and their work shows their research on indigenous material. Ashok K. Banker Ramayana Series is a landmark with various abstract qualities personified and shows writer immense knowledge of various versions of Ramayana. Ashwin Sanghi Krishna’s key is a thrilled story which present the theme scientifically and Divakaruni is also a master mind in Palace of illusion, in the representation of Draupadi’s conflict and illusion. Devdutt Pattanaik, a versatile master of myths also elaborated multiple of myths with its locale significance.

The new steel nib of mythology - Amish Tripathi in his Shiv Trilogy presented the great God among trinity-Shiva in the most humane form. He entitled himself a great devotee of Shiva and articulates at the end of this trio, “Om Namah Shivaiy. The universe bows to Lord Shiva. I bow to Lord Shiva” (Tripathi 565). In this super hit series, he illustrates a different view of Shiva, decodes all symbols

related to him and divulges Shiva from a mythical figure to a common, blood - throbbing man who accomplishes himself as a myth. In Immortals of Meluha, The Secret of the Nagas and The Oath of Vayuputras certain provoked questions are likely to come up and various mithya concepts related to Shiva are exposed. Current image of Amish's Shiva is not the image of ash smeared, naked, trident bearer, desolated being. He spelled out the mythical image of Shiva and depicted Him as livid Shiva who is all-powerful yet straight, a quick wit accompanied by an equally quick and fearsome temper, an appropriate use of inner power, glowing realization of self and overall a multilayered personality.

Shiva means 'Giver of blessings' and His deconstructionist image is represented through some wide accepted symbols as His blue throat, Trident, His Third eye, Ganas, Ganesha, Sati, Halahal and snow clad mountain. Shiva blue throat is due to the lethal poison, Halahal which was formed when Mount Mandara was positioned on the back of Akupara, the divine turtle and churned by Sessa, the serpent of infinity in the sea. When these frightful poisons started to blowout and culminating the air; even the survival of cosmos was at stake Shiva appeared in the scene and took up the lethal fluid. Parvati, caught clutch of His throat and immobile that from entering into His body. Poison did not banquet in the body of Shiva but seeped in His neck and twisted it blue. Pattanaik here differs and says, "Vishnu gave Shiva a new name: Neelkantha..." (Pattanaik 52). In this way, Shiva saved this universe and was labelled as Neelkanth. His blue throat here symbolizes a power which can even carry poison for the safeguard of cosmos and can destroy it to deconstruct. This blue color represents negative thoughts that are controlled by Shiva in every form. He neither has inhaled it nor spitted it out for maintaining the balance of cosmos. It was Shiva who neutralized this slow poison 'somras' at the peak of its effect. In Indian mythology 'somras' is considered the drink of Gods and Amish used this as a great boon which later proved to be a curse.

In Meluha, a myth was spread that Neelkanth will come and save humanity, as Daksha articulates, "what the legends also tell us is that when the problems become insurmountable for ordinary men, the Neelkanth will appear" (Tripathi 117). Shiva emerged here as a force who stands for equation and establish equanimity. He goes on an extended search for evil and in this process come across many tribes who in passage of time mature the decision of Shiva. Suryavanshis and Chandravanshis, about the myth of Neelkanth, are having their own viewpoint but Shiva later on realised, "These people aren't Evil. They are just different. Being different isn't Evil" (394). It was the task of Mahadev to establish equilibrium by extinguishing the evil force. Meanwhile, Somras emerged as great evil and Mahadev also

emerged to cleanse it, as is referred in Shrimadbhagwadgita,

"Yada-yada hi dharmasya, Glanir bhavati bhārata Abhyutthanam adharmasya, Tadatmanam sṛjamy aham"
He was called Mahadev because he kept poison in his throat but remain detached. Brihaspati, a close friend of Shiva echoes on the harbinger of evil, "Evil is never in a rush... It creeps up slowly. It doesn't hide but confronts you in broad daylight. It gives decades of warning, even centuries at time. Time is never a problem when you battle evil. The problem is the will to fight it" (Tripathi 5). Brihaspati is a planet of wisdom and learning is personified here as a character who represents scientific temper and reasonability. Shiva, the pious one reviews Gopal truly, "Evil serves a purpose" (Tripathi 260) and controls his anger meticulously while His uncle Manobhu directed Him, "Anger is your enemy, control it, control it" (201).

Number three epitomizes a great worth in Indian scriptures and directly related to Shiva. Shiva has three eyes, bears a trident, loves three bilva leaves, has three horizontal lines on forehead, holds the rattle drum which has two triangles, resides on upward pointing snow clad Himayalas also indicates a triangle and sitting position of Shiva in crossed legs also formulate an upward pointing triangle. This trio becomes the representation of three worlds; trinity Gods; Aatam, Parmatam and Prakariti; Sattva, Rajas and Tamas; Swarg, Narak and Bhuloka; self-actualization, self-preservation, self-propagation. A great writer of myths-Devdutt Pattanaik pronounces this trio as three subjective worlds-Microcosm (the private world), Mesocosm (the social world) and Macrocosm (the rest of the world). In Shivmahapurana also, there is a location of three floating cities, Tripura which were wrecked by Shiva and in Amish Shiva Trilogy these cities are characterized by three upstretched platforms in Meluha which were later demolished by Shiva. Shiva holds three eyes which indicates the power of knowledge. For the perception of external world, a normal being has two eyes. Sometimes, these sensory organs can be deceptive in reference to appeared things. So, in Hinduism, this 'Maya' is pointed out by Amish, "The universal truth does exist though it has always been an enigma to human beings", "and it will continue to remain an enigma for as long as we are bound to this mortal body" (Aiswarya & Madhan 156). To open this third eye, a lot of endless energy or 'Tapa' is required. Opening of this pineal gland, provided Shiva a new metaphysical construal of things. Pattanaik also tags an assembly between the sacred mark, Tripundra and third eye, "The three lines represent the three worlds that are deconstructed and destroyed by Shiva's third eye of wisdom" (Pattanaik 203). Shiva was disturbed by Kamdev, according to Sadguru, opened his third eye and in anger burnt the negative energy into ashes. Amish also highlights the devastation caused by

scattered Shiva on death of his beloved Sati and opening of his third eye in fury.

In Trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh; Shiva is called 'The God of Darkness'. (Karamrisc, The Presence of Shiva 79) and symbolizes destruction. This great lord of the world is always messy with ashes. Ash is a substance which relics when everything is well-done. It cannot be destroyed further. It becomes a symbol of substance that remnants after the immolation. So, Shiva takes all selfless entities in his refuse. He covers his body with ashes that recaps the mortal nature of the world and carefree look of Him. According to a contemporary study, the Archeological department found statue of Shiva in the form of Pashupati in Indus valley civilization of 6000 years ago. Shiva was worshipped as Pashupati also and Amish showed Him as leader of Nagas who are deteriorated than human in Meluha. Shiva also used Pashupatiastra to destroy somras, the main cause of all evils and Meluha also. At depth, it can be observed as Shiva is the destroyer of animal forces that upset the order of three worlds.

Shiva has weapon-Trident which is a three-pronged spear. It is invented by Him and characterizes the war skill of Shiva and His stratagem. Destruction of the evil is main target of Shiva. In Amish Shiva clashed His first war with evil armies with this weapon and established peace and equality over resources. So, it works as a powerful vigor against demonic supremacies.

G. Aiswarya comments regarding symbolic importance of trident is apt quoting, "This three- pronged spear represents the three fundamental aspects of life- three energy channels known as Ida, Pingala and Sushumana" (158). Shiva is the only God who is showed with his family. He is such a bundle of contrasts that it seems as if fire and ice simultaneously live in Him. Even His pose of 'Ardhnarishvar' where Shiva is unified with His female counterpart and encapsulated in complete identity represents Purusha and Prakriti. This figure of Ardhnarishvar established Shiva as a family man and gave thought of equality of genders to the world.

Devdutt pointed out same, "The divine inside you is God The divine around you is Goddess Without either there is neither..." (Pattanaik 139)

Aum is the most virtuous and idolized sound in Hindu mythology and it is studied that This sound has some definite vibrating effect on the human mind. Shiva is venerated originally with this sound and it is enchanted 'AUM NAMA SHIVAY' to please Him. In Shiva Trilogy, Nandi explicates to Shiva the value of Aum and says, "My Lord, Aum is the holiest word in our religion. It is

considered the primeval sound of nature. The hymn of the universe. It was so holy that for many millennia, most people would not insult it by putting down in written form." (Immortals 58) He further explains that king Bharat shaped this symbol to parade unity between Suryavanshis and Chandervanshis. The overhead half was colored as white stances for Chandervanshis and the lower half dappled as red for Suryavanshis. To the above at right of this symbol there is a sign of moon and circle that also indicates these two tribes. Shiva confronted Chandervanshis but, later on apprehended their true nature so He has a lenient corner for them and their prince became His the most favorite. Thus, the symbol of a crescent moon above Shiva head is depicted. Dr. Ashish elaborated differently the symbol used by Nagas, "...the concept of Om as three snakes symbolizing three rivers is something interesting" (Gupta 85). So, the symbol of Aum that is near the heart of Shiva is used by all three different ideologies and tribes. This is actually the essence of Indian mythology and way of life. Every culture or sub-culture whether different or same gets its space here. Amish's Shiva also conveys the same idea that despite being different none was evil.

A snow-clad mountain which is the abode of Mahadev embodies peace, stillness, serenity, the cool nature of lord. Shiva is such a powerhouse of knowledge and energy that it gets neutralized in snowy area. Pattanaik gives right reason, "Shiva is the great Tapasvin. He spends no heat engaging with the outside world. All the heat he generates remains contained within his body. Naturally, the world around Shiva, unseen by him, gradually loses all heat and becomes cold. As a result, water turns to snow. His mountain becomes Himalaya, the abode of snow" (Pattanaik 23).

Amish, a great man of myth and Devdutt Pattanaik, a high philosopher of words have solved this reverberated enigma for masses. Amish has his roots in holy city of Banaras and great respect for Indian culture. He decoded all symbols well and established him as a man whose philosophy of life is really to be adhered by mankind. He painted him as a Macho man and showed his trajectory from barbarian to lord of the masses. He uses marijuana to get rid of his guilt of the past and numbs his senses. In this form, new quasi-mythopoeic, quasi-scientific elucidations he presented. Simultaneously, he stimulated a new rubric of myths and mixed well myths into new concoctions. All mythological symbols related to Shiva are significantly demystified and resolved in these books with special focus on indigenous elements and facts. Multiple Symbols - Aum, Nagas as his favorite people, importance of the Sarasvati river, his love for Kashi, his blue throat, Somras as poison, trident his invention, his obsession for Sati, his art of dancing and singing, his liking for raw milk, tiger skin as his garment, elephant head Ganesha, warrior Kartikeya, Parvati

from Parvateshwar, Kaali as fierce goddess are dexterously used by both these writers in Indian relevance and in locale color. It created a sense of pride among readers for their scriptures and age-old-culture with glorious past. Surprisingly, in the present epoch of "Demythologizing" (Rudolf Bultmann) and re-mythologization, they have surely recognized and fixed fictionalized historical and geographical account of India by rendering the restoration of the traditional myths through the means of indigenous sense. Conclusively, they have evoked the love for own culture and tradition among Indians and became a flag holder of indigenous or home-grown elements in mythological field.

---. The Oath of Vayuputras. Westland Ltd, 2018, Print.
 Tripathi, Sneha & Tejal Jani. "Devdutt Pattanaik's Exploration on Myth". IJRAR, Volume 7, Issue 1, March 2020, pp. 262-266.

REFERENCES

- Aiswarya, G. & P. Madhan. "Symbolism in Amish Tripathi's Shiva Trilogy: A Study". Literary Endeavour, Vol. X, Issue 3, May 2019, pp. 156-159.
- Bultmann, Rudolf & others. Kerygma and Myth A Theological Debate, Harper & Row, 1961. Eliot, T. S. The Wasteland, Horace Liveright, 1922, lines 325-330.
- Goindka, Jayadaya. Shrimad Bhagavadgita Tattva Vivechani (Hindi Commentary), Geeta Press, 1st ed., 2006, Print.
- Gupta, Dr. Ashish. Shiva Trilogy of Amish Tripathi Views and Reviews, Dattsons, 1st ed., 2019, Print.
- Gupta, Rajni. "The Immortals of Meluha: Humanizing the Hindu God of Gods". Impressions, XI (II), July 2017.
- Hari, D.K. Understanding Shiva (Autobiography of India), Sri Sri Publications Trust, Kindle Edition, 2013.
- Kramrisch, Stella. The Presence of Siva, Princeton University Press, 1981, Print.
- Mishr, Jwalaprasad. Shri Shivmahapuran (Hindi Commentary), Khemraj Shrikrishnadass, 2010, Print.
- Pattanaik, Devdutt. Shiva - An Introduction, Vakils, Feffer and Simons Ltd, 2001, Print.
- . Indian Mythology: Tales, Symbols and Rituals from the Heart of the Subcontinent, Inner Traditions, 2003, Print.
- . myth= mithya: A Handbook of Hindu Mythology, Penguin Books, 2006, Print.
- . 7 Secrets of Shiva, Westland Ltd, 2011, Print.
- . Shiva to Shankara: Giving Form to the Formless, Harper Collins, 2017, Print.
- Singh, V. "Modern Retelling of Indian Myths: A Study of Rehasing Mythology through Popular Fiction". IMPACT: International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Literature, 5 (10), 2017, pp. 171 – 176.
- Tripathi, Amish. The Immortals of Meluha. Westland Ltd, 2018, Print.
- . The Secret of the Nagas. Westland Ltd, 2018, Print.