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Image of 'New Women' in Shiva Trilogy: A Study

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Abstract:

The idea of the "New Woman" has generated a lot of discussion in society and caught the interest of both people and social observers. The phrase, which dates back to the nineteenth century and persisted into the twentieth, rose to popularity thanks to the writings of authors like Henry James and Sarah Grand, most notably in their essays "The New Aspect of the Woman Question" from 1884 and "The New Aspect of the Woman Question," respectively. Feminism's vision of the "New Woman" represents the tenacity and resolve needed to change a predominately male-dominated society. Amish Tripathi's Shiva Trilogy has given ancient legends new dimensions in the field of Indian mythological literature. In his works, Amish Tripathi, a well-known modern voice in Modern Bharat, deftly weaves the essence of Indian culture and tradition. His writing acts as a link between the past and present, enabling readers to reconsider, reinterpret, and value India's rich cultural heritage. This essay examines the mythic fiction trilogy by Amish Tripathi, which includes *The Immortals of Meluha* (2010), *The Secret of the Nagas* (2011), and *The Oath of the Vayuputras* (2013). Instead of concentrating merely on conventional ethics, the research emphasizes how female characters are portrayed and how they embody specific features in the story. This investigation helps us comprehend more fully how Tripathi's writing influences the reshaping and celebration of feminine ideals in the context of Indian mythology and modern literature.

Key Words: Social equality, women empowerment, Indian mythological fiction, Gender narrative, Masculine, Feminine.

Lead In:

“The most powerful force in a woman’s life is the need to be appreciated, loved and cherished for what she is.” (Tripathi, 2010)

Amish Tripathi transformed Lord Shiva, the Hindu god, from a common tribal head to a superhero and the foretold evil-destroyer Neelkanth, making him the well-known and best-selling author in India. It is a summary of the Shiva Trilogy. However, Tripathi greatly studies the female characters' actions, thoughts, and other behaviours. In the Shiva Trilogy, female characters include Sati, Queen Kali, Krittika, Anandmayi, etc. They are all portrayed as strong individuals who speak and behave magnificently strongly. Even the main character, Shiva, can occasionally become immovable despite his wife Sati's keen gaze and



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unwavering determination.

The mythical realm of Meluha, which Suryavanshi's control, is the setting of the first novel, *The Immortals of Meluha* (Tripathi 2010). Meluha is a flawless empire that Daksha rules over. Chandravanshi repeatedly launches terrorist strikes on him. The Nagas is a cursed race with physical abnormalities, and Chandravanshi joins them. Shiva, the leader of the Gunas and a powerful guardian and warrior, is invited by Daksha to solve his troubles. Shiva agrees to his suggestion. He encounters Sati, King Daksha's daughter, along the road, admires her bravery, and develops feelings for her. Shiva and Sati are in a defensive stance, facing the direction of any potential attack, with Sati's sword at their sides. Later, Shiva challenges Chandravanshi to a war. The Meluhans and the Swadweepan engage in a bloody conflict, which the Meluhas eventually win.

Amish Tripathi portrays Sati as a warrior and the whole embodiment of Shiva. The precise definition of sati is love, honesty, devotion, bravery, and integrity. She is brave and will fight until her last breath, yet she is loyal to tradition and custom. "*The law says no vikarma should be allowed on the Yagna platform*". (226, I.M) Even if the discriminatory legislation of that culture impacts her, she does not attempt to alter the civilisation of her country. She originally belonged to the 'Vikarma' people, or untouchables who lived as outcasts. Because she gives birth to a stillborn child, Sati becomes a Vikarma. However, Sati angrily responds to Shiva's pledge to prevent the Vikarma people from living as outcasts, telling him she does not want his protection and cannot be rescued. Sati's rage reveals that she dislikes people's kindness. Sati bravely takes her kid and her twin sister to the palace where she and her family reside when she learns that they are Nagas (the Naga people are also outcast by the rule).

Sati loves her spouse fiercely and graciously. She is not, however, influenced by her spouse or other masculine characters. Although she has her own beliefs and methods, she always ensures those things are true and don't hurt others. Sati is a true warrior since she engages in combat with the adversaries until she is overcome. She passes away after a protracted struggle with the Egyptian Swuth, who had little regard for women. But he marvels at Sati's bravery and her powerful resistance to him. Finally, he declares that murdering Sati will be the highest honour of his life.

All female characters, including Veerini, Queen Kali, Anandmayi, and Krittika, have strong personalities, wills, and Sati. In addition to being a skilled combatant, Queen Kali is a kind monarch. She is a Naga and is in charge of raising Ganesh, Sati's son, who is also a Naga. Sati's mother, Veerini, is the one who values her



family most. At her death, she decides to stay with her husband despite his errors.

Following traditional ethics, 'Male' methods of moral reasoning—which focus on laws, rights, and universality are always preferred over 'Female' methods, which emphasise ties to others, responsibility, and particularity. (Jaggar1992). Moral reasoning is a thinking process determining whether an act is right or wrong. Amish revised, reformulated and rethought to present the dynamic role of Indian women. Veerini, the wife of Daksha, is a very dextrous, strong, caring, loving and powerful woman. Once, Daksha shouts at her in anger, “You are the source of all my problems! Because of you, I haven’t been able to achieve all that I could have!” Veerini looked at the attendants and turned back towards her husband. *“Keep your voice down, Daksha. Don’t make a mockery of our marriage.”* (Tripathi 2013, 116)

Veerini handles pressing matters independently but cannot convey her wish to live with her kids. She eventually gains fortitude from being a mother to stand up for her kids. Even she accepts responsibility for Daksha's offence. It demonstrates her commitment, love, and concern for the family. By the end of the third book in the Trilogy, Veerini has earned a suitable position in King Daksha's life, and the two of them jointly safeguard the lives of their offspring.

Amish & the depiction of *New Women*:

Traditional ethics restrict women to the home, where they are expected to cook, clean, and care for the ill and children. It spreads the notion that women are victims. In Amish's Trilogy, women are not portrayed as victims but as embodiments of liberation. The Amish want to challenge gender norms and preconceptions. He never keeps ladies in their personal space but allows them to make decisions. Women who oppose patriarchal tyranny by teaching women about self-determination and value are a beautiful part of the Amish utopian society.

In the trilogy, Sati represents women's liberation at its finest. She is the princess of Meluha and the daughter of Daksha. She is the epitome of beauty and intelligence. She has flawless skin, long black hair flowing in the wind, curved features, and enticing blue eyes. She is unmatched in terms of her courage, kindness, and martial prowess. She is "Vikarma," or untouchable, and a widow. Untouchability is seen differently by the Amish. It has nothing to do with birth. In the novel, a woman is labelled an outcast and untouchable if she gives birth to a malformed or stillborn kid since her condition is believed to be due to the misdeeds of her previous birth. Sati's husband passes away on the same day, and her first child is stillborn or born with



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deformities. It is a requirement in Meluha that Vikarma covers their body with sacred linen and refrain from touching anybody or getting remarried. They must absolve themselves of their sins and worship Lord Agni once a month.

Even though she can rebel against Vikarma's guiding principles, Sati respects and adheres to all these ideals. Famously, traditional ethics holds that women lack males' moral depth and maturity. (Jaggar1992) Sati and Kali, as Vikarma, two female royal figures, experience the suffering and anguish of discrimination. Yajna will then insult Sati.

I don't understand what a Vikarma woman is doing travelling with the convoy of Neelkanth (Shiva). She is polluting the entire journey. (Trilogy 2010, 117)

Tripathi presents Sati as an excessive warrior and courageous tigress to dispel the idea that women are a "weaker vessel." Sati battles side by side with Shiva, like other Indian female fighters, including Rani Laxmibai of Janshi, Rani Chennamma, Rani Abbaka Devi, and Rani Rudrama Devi. A tiger led a troop of thirty lions and lionesses that invaded the Kashi village of Ichhavar. Sati voluntarily steps up to the plate to protect the villagers' lives and engages in combat with the beast. Since Sati overcame her fear and worked hard to help others, she deserves to be honoured and celebrated.

Traditional ethics demonstrate scant regard for the interests and rights of women in comparison to those of males. But Amish portrays Sati's choices and actions throughout the Trilogy so realistically that his fair portrayals and respect for female characters are genuine. The supreme Egyptian warrior Swuth views women as "stupid baby-producing machines!"

... 'stupid baby-producing machines' and 'only a little better than animals.' (469, O.V) Whispered, when he is going to kill her, 'Killing you shall be my life's honour, My Lady' (478, O. V)

Swuth and Sati battle for the lives of their people. Even though she is severely hurt and covered in her blood, she chooses to die like a warrior rather than flee for her life. Swuth claims that Sati is his "Final Kill" after being forced by Sati's bravery to change his mind on women. Every warrior would face an equal foe, whom he may beat, but whose bravery would cause him to renounce his trade and honour the final foe for the rest of his life, according to a story constructed by Amish. Every great warrior must carry out their "Final Kill" with honour before quitting fighting.



Ayurvati, the state's medical staff leader, is another strong female figure who easily performs surgery. Because of her exceptional abilities, she has the highest regard among Meluhans. She always wears a choti on her head, a Janeu on her shoulder, and a white dot on her forehead. “*Her head was shaven clean except for a knotted tuft of hair at the back, called choti. A sacred thread called a Janeu was tied from her left shoulder across her torso to the right side.*” Hindus traditionally only allow males to wear janeu and choti on their bald skulls. In Tripathi's impartial universe, prejudice is not based on a person's gender.

The concept that both the masculine and feminine inside them was explored by both the protagonist and the other important characters. The chief of medicine, Lady Ayurvati, is the first female character introduced in these books. Ayurvati is described as having a manly look.

The doctor, a petite, wheat-skinned woman, was dressed in a simple white cloth tied around her waist and legs in a style the Meluhans called dhoti..... Her head had been shaved clean except for a knotted tuft of hair at the back, called a choti. A loose string called a janau was tied from her left shoulder across her torso to the right side. (15, IM)

Princess Anandmayi's depiction powerfully conveys her independent attitude. She doesn't hesitate to express her emotions to others when dressed up. She dressed as she wanted and never gave a damn about the naysayers. She leads a unique life, as evidenced by:

‘How are you doing, parvateshwar?’ Asked Anandmayi flashing a smile while scanning him from top to bottom, her eyebrows raised lasciviously.

Shiva couldn't help smiling as he saw parvateshwar blush slightly.

The leader of Meluha's armed forces, Parvateshwar, who controls the army, navy, and special forces, blushes when a woman beckons him in these exchanges. According to their gender prejudice, this story's male and female characters have been narrated in completely opposing ways.

Women characters like Sati, Ayurvati, Kanakhala, and Kali demonstrated their leadership qualities in all three Shiva Trilogy novels through intelligence, bravery, and management. We could observe their male qualities as they were performing their responsibilities. Anandmayi displays her emancipation from the male gender in her expression and attire. Even Parvateshwar, the armed forces commander, is powerless over her.



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Conclusion:

The concerns of male dominance and the marginalization of women by systems are addressed in Amish literature. Tripathi demonstrates that women should step up, speak out, and fight for their rights and needs, in addition to the underprivileged. Shiva weds Sati in violation of the Vikarma laws. Shiva's courageous action improves the condition of women and offers civilization a new direction. Amish's comments can transform society for the better by bringing the hot-button topic of widow remarriage to the forefront.

Historically, India has been a patriarchal country, where males hold major positions in all aspects of life as a matter of birth right, and women are viewed as unfit for intellectual or creative endeavours. Indian women are capable of standing shoulder to shoulder with men, according to Tripathi's Trilogy, which analyses conventional feminist principles. Instead of remaining behind the four walls of their home, they have a more important function to perform in this world. Men who previously believed women were useless have changed their minds and realized they could be real companions and colleagues. In terms of performance or rank, women are equal to males. Amish artists created fresh female portraits to change the stereotypical perception of women. He treasured his admiration for the qualities of women and made the feminine gender his personification. His impressive work demonstrates his keen eye for allowing social realities to soar to the highest literary altitudes.



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