

Deconstruction of Lord Shiva in the Era of Post-Truth: A Study of Amish Tripathi's *The Immortals of Meluha*

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ABSTRACT

In the current era of Post-Truth, the concept of truth is not easily found out. Nowadays the false or fabricated appearance and ideas when presented make them appear more logical, reasonable and far widely accepted with emotional and personal belief, and appeal than the original and pure truth. Taking this concept into account, the current research paper aims to investigate how “Lord Shiva” who is worshipped by the Hindus the world over as the ‘Lord of Lords’, has been portrayed as a ‘human being’ possessing extraordinary prowess by Amish Tripathi in his first and debut novel of the *Shiva Trilogy* - ‘*The Immortals of Meluha*’. The paper examines the post-truth hidden in the evolution of myths and fables surrounding Lord Shiva and the other Indian deities and portrays the evolution of Lord Shiva as the ‘Supreme God’ from a ‘human being’ who lived centuries ago. The novel under investigation has been analysed using the Postmodern and Post-truth theories and perspectives.

Keywords: Deconstruction, fables, God, human, Meluha, myth, post-truth, Shiva

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INTRODUCTION

The novel *The Immortals of Meluha* was published in 2010 by Amish Tripathi. This was his first step towards the success series. He continued his success steps with *The Immortals of Meluha* (2010), the first of the series of Shiva Trilogy, followed by *The Secret of the Nagas* (2011), and *The Oath of the Vayuputras* (2013). He then continued with the Ram Chandra Series, the first book

being *The Scion of Ikshvaku* (2015). He was the one who set the new trend of writing Post-Modern Mythological Fiction and was followed by Ashwin Sanghi, Kavita Kane, Anand Neelakantan, Krishna Udayasankar, Vamsee Juluri, and Anuja Chandramouli. Amish Tripathi has re-narrated myths in the modern contemporary way by reviewing ancient mythology with a new perspective.

Review of Literature

Paul (2017) pointed out that myth had been used as a metaphor by Amish Tripathi. She said that the author did not discover a new world but used the magical realism techniques to express the supernatural elements with the usual and accustomed world. The actual truth of Shiva as the Lord of Lords, a mythical god, is covered by the Post-truth created by Tripathi in portraying Shiva as a mortal being who has risen to the state of Godhood through his Karma. This perspective helps us to identify the research gap for the current study. Nair and Chandran (2017) in Amish Tripathi's *Shiva Trilogy* asserted that 'Lord Shiva' or 'Mahadev' was prevalent in every individual. An individual should discover and regenerate the ability to captivate the negativity and evil and redirect them to have a positive effect on the others around them. Sumathi (2017) in her research article commented that the novel *The Immortals of Meluha* gave a perception about the culture and ideologies of Prakriti and Karma - life and the universe. Kaviya (2017) remarked that in the novel *The Immortals of Meluha*, the Vikrama-class individuals had been

portrayed as the marginalized class who were treated as untouchables and had been isolated due to the sins they had committed in their previous birth. Shiva, the warrior, liberated them from the unfair humility they had undergone. The research article discusses the marginalization of the Vikrama class and their emancipation from tyranny.

Singh (2016) in his research paper pointed out that some of the contemporary writers like Amish Tripathi, Ashok Banker, and Ashwin Sanghi had probed into the genre of mythology by synthesizing it with other genres of writing. This interblend of mythology with fantasy has initiated a novel practice of writing in the world of fiction. Their objective had been to view the ancient mythologies from a new perspective. Sharmely (2016) in her research article discussed how Lord Shiva had been represented as a human being and it was due to his karma and resultant deeds in life that made him God in Amish Tripathi's *Shiva Trilogy*. Balaji (2016) in his research paper stated that an author could reconstruct ancient mythology by adding some required objects to the ancient story to construct a new story. Farsana (2015) too, opined that retelling the actual myth in modern writing had become a trend in the past few decades. She stated that especially in Indian writings in English, this way of writing had captured the attention of modern readers. The contemporary readers developed a liking for the post-truth 'Shiva' rather than the original Lord Shiva as a mythical being. On the other hand, Kusugal (2015) probed into the credible representation of equipment, medicine,

manufacture of Somras, enlightened lifestyle, and the evolution of Shiva from the 'chief' of the Tibetan Guna Tribe to 'Lord Shiva'. Choudhury (2014) stated that the Meluhans created an identity for other clusters by governing, controlling and subjugating the other groups based on their ethnicity and residential identities. He went on to affirm that the dynamics of power and knowledge were used to gain the power to govern other groups. Amish Tripathi has thus projected the dominance of power and knowledge by the Meluhans.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Objective

The study explores how the traditional and mythological character of 'Lord Shiva' has been decentered in *The Immortals of Meluha* and projected as a 'human being'. In light of the above observation, the present paper aims to bring out the truth surrounding Lord Shiva and other Deities who have been portrayed as mortal beings rather than Gods in the era of Post-Truth.

Methodology

The theories implemented for analysing the text, *The Immortals of Meluha* by Amish Tripathi, were Post-Truth and Post Modernism theories. The methodology used for the study was descriptive (observational method) and analytical (literary research).

Background of *The Immortals of Meluha*.

Amish Tripathi has portrayed Lord Shiva as a human being in his debut novel *The*

Immortals of Meluha. The novel was set in Mount Kailash (Tibet) in 1900 BC where Shiva was portrayed as a twenty-one-year-old chief of the Guna tribes who fought with the Pakratris every month for survival. Nandi was one of the captains of the Meluhan army who went to Tibet for some time to request the Guna tribes to come as immigrants to his country Meluha *in lieu* of by promising lands for cultivation and peaceful lives. One day the Pakratris attacked the Guna tribes and Nandi fought against them. Shiva started trusting Nandi and after consulting with his tribe agreed to go with him. Nandi took them to Srinagar and introduced them to Chitraangadh, an orientation executive, who arranged rooms for their stay. The Guna tribals were given medical rehabilitation under the supervision of Ayurvati, the chief of Medicine in Meluha, for seven days.

Ayurvati gave medicinal drink called Somras to all the Guna tribals in the rehabilitation centre. He also instructed them strictly to maintain hygiene. As a result of consuming Somras, the guna tribals suffered from a fever which ultimately cured all their diseases. Ayurvati treated all the Guna tribals but Shiva did not contract the fever and instead, his throat turned blue. Nandi and Ayurvati were surprised to witness this miracle. Nandi addressed Shiva as "My Lord" and "Neelakanth". He informed Emperor Daksha who ordered him not to disclose it until he met him. Nandi introduced Shiva to the emperor who proclaimed him as the 'Neelakanth' - the destroyer of the evil

Chandravanshis. Daksha told Shiva that they were Suryavanshis and the Chandravanshis were evil people who had joined the Nagas - the cursed people born with deformities.

Shiva met Sati at Meru near a temple where he saved her from a group of kidnapers. He was unaware that she was the daughter of Daksha. One day he heard the sound of someone dancing near the garden and found it to be Sati. He pointed out the small flaws in Sati's dance steps, and while teaching Sati, he accidentally touched her. He came to know that she belonged to the Vikrama class. She asked him to go for the Suthikaram because Vikrama class people were cursed in their previous birth and hence they were not supposed to be touched. Later Shiva came to know that Sati got married ninety years ago and gave birth to a stillborn child. Her husband too drowned the same day the dead child was born and after this she was declared as a 'Vikrama'.

Shiva enquired about the Somras and found that it was manufactured in mount Mandar. Daksha requested him to save them from the evil 'Chandravanshis' and asked permission to proclaim his arrival but he refused as he wanted to visit the Somras manufacturing site. Daksha, his family members, Nandi, Parvateshwer and Sati's friend, Krittika visited the place. Shiva met Brahaspati, the chief Meluhan scientist, and befriended him who explained how to make Somras. The Chandravanshis and the Nagas attacked them.

Shiva learnt that they were the trouble-makers and they even attacked Sati with a

fire arrow. Ayurvati treated her but she was not confident whether she would recover or not. Shiva advised her to consume the Somras after which Sati recovered. Daksha asked Shiva whether he was willing to marry Sati, to which Shiva readily agreed. A seven-day grand marriage function was arranged that was attended by important members. While returning from the marriage ceremony, Brahaspati was brutally murdered by the Nagas; whereupon Shiva declared war against the Chandravanshis. Shiva won the battle and ten thousand Chandravanshis were killed and their emperor and his son were captured. They were asked to follow the Meluhan ways of life. Daksha declared Parvateshwer as the governor. Anandmayi – the Ayodhyan Princess met Shiva and revealed the truth that they were not evil and they did not have any relationship with the Nagas either. Shiva felt guilty of having killed ten thousand people without knowing the truth. In Ayodhya, Shiva met a pandit who hailed him as 'Mahadev'. The pandit further proclaimed that Shiva's karma would guide his future. Sati, who had been waiting for Shiva outside, was attacked by the Nagas and the novel ends with Shiva rushing to save Sati.

Postmodernism

Postmodernism is defined as "any of a number of trends or movements in the arts and literature developing in the 1970s in reaction to or rejection of the dogma, principles of established Modernism,..." ("Postmodernism," n.d.). The impact of Postmodernism was first initiated in

the discipline of architecture and civil engineering before its rays could fall in the discipline of philosophy, art, technology, literature, and the other disciplines of study. The end of world wars brought hopelessness and insecurity in the hearts of people which got reflected in all other fields. This hopelessness and absurdity of life resulted in the development of Postmodernism. The basic notions that Postmodernism embraced were questioning, nihilism, inter-textuality and decentering.

Postmodernism rejects the dominance of the center and its influence on the marginalized, and the dominance of the aristocrats upon the subjected one, be it human or ideology.

The major proponents of the field were Jean-Francois Lyotard, Friedrich Nietzsche, Jean Baudrillard, Jacques Derrida, and Michel Foucault. Postmodernism thus aims at liberating man from the shackles that held them with various names of the center, and from the strong ideologies and western concepts as superior.

Deconstruction

Jacques Derrida, the founder of the concept of 'Deconstruction', stated that deconstruction was a strategy or a tool to "rules for reading, interpretation, and writing" (Dobie, 2012) the text in multiple perspectives. Deconstruction helps us to understand that a text has numerous interpretations. He borrowed the idea of a sign, signifier and signified from Saussure, and stated that a signifier would lead to different signified.

Post-truth

The axiom "Post-Truth" got media-hype after being selected as the word of the year in 2016 in Oxford English Dictionary. The term was first used by Steve Tesich (1992) in his article *The Watergate Syndrome – A Government of Lies* in The Nation magazine. Tesich discussed the fake moral face of Bush. Donald Trump's way of giving alternative facts about the number of people attending his swearing-in ceremony was more than Barack Obama's but the truth was just the opposite.

Pattanaik (2018) in his article titled "*Is Post-Truth same as Myth?*" commented that in Post-Truth the concept of alternative facts or narratives was developed to hide the original truth from the people whereas, in Indian mythology, there were many alternative narratives other than facts. He argued that people in the Middle East and America believed in one God, which resulted in singular and linear belief in all fields of life. Therefore, the Western myth considered the alternative narratives as false and myths in the 19th Century paved the way for the colonizers to conquer the places they wished to conquer. Pattanaik (2018) commented that Western mythology neglected facts and the very nature and concept of diversity. The important concepts that will be used for analysing the novel are puffery, confirmation bias, and alternative facts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Mythology

Myths, according to Donald Mills (2003), “are a cultural inheritance, a tradition handed down from one generation to another, and therefore invested with communal values. This explains the close association between a community and its mythology”. On the other hand, mythology is

the study and interpretation of often sacred tales or fables of a culture known as myths or the collection of such stories which deal with various aspects of the human condition: good and evil; the meaning of suffering; human origins; the origin of place-names, animals, cultural values, and traditions; the meaning of life and death; the afterlife; and the gods or a god. (Mark, 2018).

Mythologies are abundant with the stories of gods or god-like humans the world over. In Hindu mythology also, we find the mention of many gods and goddesses. Among them, Lord Shiva holds a special place and there exists diverse myths surrounding him in both North (Aryan / Vedic culture) and South (Dravidian culture) India.

Evolution of Lord Shiva in Hindu Mythology

The origin of Lord Shiva dates back to as early as the Indus Valley Civilization. Shaivism or Siva traditions probably started during 200 BC to 100 AD. During the Pre-Historic/Non-Aryan period, the religion and belief system of the Dravidians (South Indians) were similar to that of Shaivism.

A few researchers claim that the origin of Shaivism during the Non-Aryan period is based on the archaeological excavation of the “Pashupati Seal” from the Indus Valley Civilization. There exists many interlinks between the Indus Valley Civilization and the Dravidian forms of Hinduism in South India. The Proto-Siva is almost identical to the seated bull icons found in early Elamite Seals from 3000 to 2750 BC (Flood & Flood, 1996).

Iyengar (1989), in his book *Dravidian India*, cited few eminent scholars like Ragozin, Fergusson, and Steveson who strongly regarded Shiva to be a Tamil God. It can be said that Pre-Historic/Non-Aryan Proto-Siva religious beliefs were Dravidian in origin but after the Aryan invasion, the Dravidian Proto-Siva assimilated many concepts from Aryan Vedic scriptures that led Shaivism to evolve into an individual cult in itself.

The further enhancement of Shaivism had its assimilation in the Vedic scriptures such as ‘Rig-Veda’ (hymns 1.114, 1.43, 2.33), ‘Yayur-Veda’ and ‘Svetasvatara Upanishads’ where he is known as God Rudra who is considered to be a precursor to Shiva in Aryan culture (Flood, 2003).

Iyengar (1989) inferred that the worship of Siva during the Stone Age existed in the form of ‘Linga worship’ which was carried forward by the Aryans during the Vedic period from 1500 to 500 BCE. Lord Shiva is also mentioned in the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. In the *Mahabharata*, Pasupathas are mentioned as one of the most ancient worshippers of Lord Shiva.

The *Shiva Puranas* mention Lord Shiva as the Supreme Being or the God of Gods. According to some historians, the word 'Shiva' is derived from the Tamil word, Chivan or Shivan which means 'red in colour'. In Dravidian mythology, mention is made of Punyakshi, a maiden with extraordinary powers who wanted to marry Lord Shiva. Shiva travelled to South India to marry her but could not do so due to the tricks played by the people of her community. Unable to bear this pain, Punyakshi left her body in a place which later came to be known as 'Kanyakumari' after her (Sadhguru, 2016). Thus there are a lot of myths surrounding Lord Shiva in Hindu mythology.

The Immortals of Meluha in the Light of Deconstruction Perspective

Comparison of Actual Myth and Amish Tripathi's Novel. There are many myths and fables surrounding Lord Shiva and other Indian deities but the major myths have been deconstructed by the author in his text *The Immortals of Meluha*. Those myths have been altered by Amish Tripathi in a different perspective. Indian myths have diverse narratives as discussed by Pattanaik (2018). A few are discussed below which are mostly believed to be authentic myths and fables about Lord Shiva and other Indian deities.

Shiva. There is a popular myth that a Primordial Goddess took birth just three days prior to the coming into existence of the earth and universe. She grew up quickly into a woman and then yearned for a man to

satiate her needs. The Primordial Goddess set on a search for a man and when she found none, she gave birth to Lord Brahma. Brahma grew up very fast and was the eldest of all. When the Goddess asked him to sleep with her he refused, since she had given birth to him and was his mother. In fury, the Goddess opened her third eye which was in the palm of her hand. As a result of the fire, Brahma was burned down to a heap of ashes. The very next day she created Lord Vishnu, but he also ended up in a similar fate (Ramanujan, 1990).

Finally, on the third day, she created Shiva. Once she created him, she asked him to sleep with her. She also warned him by showing the ashes of the other two. After learning the fate of his brothers; he accepted to sleep with her but under few conditions. He asked her to teach all that she knew to make him equal to her otherwise he will be inferior to her. He also said that no woman would like to have an inferior man as her husband, so he asked her to share all the powers and knowledge she possessed with him; so that when they unite they would complement each other. The Goddess accepted those conditions and shared her power, knowledge, and wisdom with Shiva (Ramanujan, 1990).

But in *The Immortals of Meluha*, the author portrays Shiva as a twenty-one-year-old young warrior and the chief of Guna tribes living at the foot of Mount Kailash in Tibet in 1900 BC. Shiva and his Guna tribals are seen migrating to Meluha for leading a peaceful and prosperous life as promised to them by Nandi and other Meluhan officials.

1900 BC, Mansarovar Lake (At the foot of Mount Kailash, Tibet).

Shiva gazed at the orange sky. The clouds hovering above Mansarovar had just parted to reveal the setting sun. The brilliant giver of life was calling it a day once again. Shiva had seen a few sunrises in his twenty-one years. But the sunset! He tried never to miss the sunset! He squatted and perched his lithe, muscular body on the narrow ledge extending over the lake. The numerous battle-scars on his skin gleamed in the shimmering reflected light of the waters. Shiva remembered well his carefree childhood days.... He still held the record in his tribe for the highest number of bounces: seventeen. (Tripathi, 2010).

Brahaspati, the chief scientist of the Meluhan Empire, was very rationalistic and told Shiva that all the people and the emperor might think of him as the saviour of the Suryavanshis. Brahaspati also said that there would be a scientific reason behind Shiva's throat turning blue and added that Neelkanth would only be a destroyer of Evil. Meluhans think that Shiva would destroy Chandravanshis as they considered them to be Evil but besides this, many other problems were there to be solved in Meluha. Daksha and Meluhans looked upon Shiva as God and Savior of the Suryavanshis but Parvateshwar and Brahaspati did not consider Shiva as God and rather addressed him as Shiva.

Neelkantha vs Neelkanth. Lord Shiva is also popularly known as Neelkantha or the 'blue-throated one'. The story behind Shiva's throat turning blue dates back to the time when Devas (Gods) and Asuras (Demons) were churning the ocean (Samudra Manthan) to acquire the potion of life (Amrit). The first potion that came out of the churning was Halahala, which was in the form of a dark sticky foam. Halahala could destroy the whole universe. To save the universe, Shiva drank it and while he was consuming it, Goddess Parvathi caught hold of Shiva's neck to stop the poison from spreading into his body. The poison got stuck in the throat that made his neck turn blue. It is also said that snake Vasuki (King of Snakes) helped Shiva to hold the poison in his neck. Shiva was overwhelmed by this gesture of Vasuki and accepted him around his neck forever.

In the above-mentioned original myth, Shiva's throat turns blue due to the consumption of the Halahala poison during the churning of the ocean but in the novel, Amish Tripathi has retold the incident from a different perspective. According to him, Shiva is a warrior and the Chief of Guna Tribes in Mount Kailash, Tibet. He and his people are brought to Meluha by Nandi for protection and in lieu of land and peaceful life. Shiva and his people migrate to Meluha. According to Meluha Immigration policies, they should stay in Srinagar for one week for medical examination and rehabilitation. During this juncture, Ayurvati gives Somras to all the Guna tribesmen including Shiva. After drinking the Somras, the Gunas suffer

from sudden high fever except Shiva. The consumption of Somras turns the colour of his throat to blue and hence he is called Neelkanth.

Ayurvati just pointed at Shiva's neck. Nandi looked up. The neck shone an eerie iridescent blue. With a cry that sounded like that of a long caged animal just released from captivity, Nandi collapsed on his knees. 'My Lord! You have come! The Neelkanth has come!'

..... 'What the hell is going on here?' Shiva asked agitatedly.

Holding a hand to his freezing neck, he turned around to the polished copper plate and stared in stunned astonishment at the reflection of his neel kanth; his blue throat. (Tripathi, 2010).

Sati. Sati was the daughter of Daksha and is also called Dakshayani. According to the legend, Daksha was against the marriage of Sati and Shiva. As an act of vengeance, Daksha arranged an auspicious ritual to which all the gods were invited except Shiva. On hearing this news, Sati became very furious and went to the ceremony alone where she was humiliated by her father. Unable to bear this, she threw herself into the auspicious fire that was ignited in the ceremony. When Shiva learnt of Sati's death, he created two demons Virabhadra and Rudrakali from his hair. The two demons created destruction in the ceremony and beheaded Daksha. The other Gods rushed to Shiva and appealed to stop the chaos and destruction. At their behest, Shiva brought

Daksha back to life by fixing a goat's head. Many years later, Sati took reincarnation as Parvathi. Parvathi often incarnates as Kali and Durga to kill evil whenever it takes the upper hand on earth (Cartwright, 2018).

Sati in the actual myth is regarded as the 'blessed one' and she is considered married only to Shiva. But in the novel understudy, she belongs to the Vikrama class who are considered to be 'cursed' due to the sins perpetuated in their previous birth. She was considered to be cursed since she gave birth to a stillborn child and her first husband died of drowning in the river at the time of the birth of her child. Sati was also portrayed as a fierce fighter and a warrior in the novel.

'What! Sati was married?!'

'Yes. That was around ninety years back. It was a political marriage with one of the noble families of the empire. Her husband's name was Chandandhwaj. She got pregnant and went to the Maika to deliver the child. It was the monsoon season. Unfortunately, the child was stillborn.'

'Oh my god!' said Shiva, empathising with the pain Sati must have felt.

'But it was worse. On the same day, her husband, who had gone to the Narmada to pray for the safe birth of their child, accidentally drowned. On that cursed day, her life was destroyed.'

.... 'She became a widow and was declared a vikarma the same day.' (Tripathi, 2010).

Daksha is very happy to learn that Shiva is in love with Sati whereas, in the original mythology, Daksha is against their relationship.

Nandi. Surabi was the mother of cows in heaven. Unexpectedly, she started giving birth to too many cows. As a result, milk from all these cows oozed out and flooded the meditation house of Shiva. Shiva, being disturbed and angry by this act of the cows, burnt all the cows with his third eye. The Gods rushed to calm Shiva's fury and anger and offered him a magnificent bull named Nandi. Nandi was born from the union of Surabi and Kasyapa. Shiva accepted him and rode upon him. Nandi also received a boon that whoever whispered their wishes in his ears would get them granted by Shiva immediately. Nandi thus became the guardian of other animals (Chauhan, 2016).

Nandi has been portrayed by Amish Tripathi as a human and he holds the position of Captain in the Meluhan Army. He is considered to be a vicious warrior. Nandi's character is introduced in the novel as an official who helps to immigrate Shiva and Guna tribals to the city of Meluha. Shiva considers Nandi to be his close friend:

'Of course, you may. You don't need to take my permission, Nandi,' said Shiva.

'But in return, you have to promise me something, my friend.'

'Of course, Sir,' replied Nandi bowing slightly.

'Call me Shiva. Not Sir,' grinned Shiva.

'I am your friend. Not your Chief.' A

surprised Nandi looked up, bowed again and said, 'Yes Sir. I mean, yes, Shiva.' (Tripathi, 2010).

The Immortals of Meluha in the Light of Post-Truth Perspective

Puffery. Mohler (2005) in his article titled *The Post-Truth Era – Welcome to the Age of Dishonesty* discussed the key concepts and ideologies of the post-truth era written by Ralph Keyes in his book titled *The Post-Truth Era: Dishonesty and Deception in Contemporary Life*. Keyes (2004) only concentrated on the American culture and society whereas today the elements or characteristics of Post-Truth have spread all over the world and are not restricted to certain parts or nations in the world. Keyes commented that 'puffery' had become an art in itself in America.

Puffery, according to Oxford English Dictionary means "exaggerated or false praise" ("Puffery", n.d.). Individuals, institutions or groups acquire the old concepts, materials, subjects or ideologies available and recoat them in a new way to get high recognition or for promotional purposes. Similarly, Keyes (2004) said that individuals overstressed the truth with new facts that were false to hike up the societal ranking.

Amish Tripathi, a banker, turned to writing novels and wanted to write a philosophical thesis on the nature of evil. His family members, especially his brother and sister, asked him to write an adventurous novel messed with a philosophical touch in it because it was the writing trend prevalent

in contemporary times. Tripathi had used the old myth and fables surrounding Lord Shiva but deconstructed the existing myth with a scientific explanation stating that Shiva's karma and actions raised him to the status of God.

Over the centuries, no foreigner who came to our land — conqueror, merchant, scholar, ruler, traveller — believed that such a great man could possibly exist in reality. They assumed that he must have been a mythical God, whose existence could be possible only in the realms of human imagination. Unfortunately, this belief became our received wisdom. (Tripathi, 2010).

This work is, therefore, a tribute to Lord Shiva and the lesson that his life teaches us. A lesson lost in the depths of time and ignorance. A lesson, that all of us can rise to be better people. A lesson, that there exists a potential god in every single human being. (Tripathi, 2010).

Tripathi had decentred Shiva - the Lord to an ordinary human being with extraordinary powers who had raised himself on the societal ladder and attained popularity around the world.

Confirmation Bias

Sebastian Dieguez (2017) in her article *Post-Truth: The Dark Side of the Brain* analysed Post-Truth from the perspective of psychology. Dieguez discussed the concept of confirmation bias wherein she stated that the human brain had strong affirmations

and a few sets of standard beliefs. When the human brain receives new beliefs or information about the already existing standard belief it holds; the brain analyses both the beliefs and information and retains only the set of beliefs or information that matches or correlates with the already existing sets of beliefs or information; and this process is termed as Confirmation Bias.

Dieguez (2017) commented that in the era of post-truth, politicians were speaking with more freedom which of course was utter gibberish and the fake news was propagating swiftly. She stated that the worst of this swiftly propagating fake news was that the human brains tended to love it more than the actual truth.

The Immortals of Meluha and the other two novels received much criticism because of Tripathi's portrayal of Lord Shiva as a human being and the reversal of the actual myth with rationale. Due to the reversal of actual myth, it gained controversial comments and criticisms. Many individuals have 'confirmation bias' of considering Shiva as God. Due to their strong belief in the idea of Lord Shiva as God, they are not ready to accept the perspective of Amish Tripathi's Shiva as a Warrior who rose from the status of a human being to Lord.

But what if we are wrong? What if Lord Shiva was not a figment of a rich imagination, but a person of flesh and blood? Like you and me. A man who rose to become god-like because of his karma. That is the premise of the Shiva Trilogy, which interprets the rich mythological heritage of ancient India,

blending fiction with historical fact. (Tripathi, 2010).

Post-truth by Indifference

Monod and Lipetz (2017) in their article titled *Between Post-truth and Epistemicocracy: Positioning a Democratic Politics* discussed two types of 'post-truth'- the first type was where an individual, group or institution's beliefs were upheld and considered significant than the truth that could be proved logically and the second type of truth was 'Post-Truth by Indifference' which was a premeditated creation of fabricated facts, principles and beliefs.

Tripathi had read all the old myths surrounding Shiva and had knitted the new fabricated story about Shiva based on the old prevalent myths. He had a rich knowledge about myths and Gods that he inherited from his grandfather who was a Pandit. He had re-created the existence of Shiva as a leader of the Guna tribe in the opening chapter 'He Has Come!' of his novel. Shiva as Leader or Chief of tribes says:

'I keep nothing secret from you. All of you are aware of the invitation of the foreigners,' continued Shiva, pointing to Nandi and the Meluhans. 'They fought shoulder-to-shoulder with us today. They have earned my trust. I want to go with them to Meluha. But this cannot be my decision alone.'

'You are our chief, Shiva,' said Bhadra. 'Your decision is our decision. That is the tradition.'

'Not this time,' said Shiva holding out his hand. 'This will change our lives completely. I believe the change will be for the better. Anything will be better than the pointlessness of the violence we face daily. I have told you what I want to do. But the choice to go or not is yours. Let the Gunas speak. This time, I follow you.' (Tripathi, 2010).

Thus the above quote portrays Shiva as a democratic leader rather than an autocratic leader. He asks for suggestions and opinions from the tribals before implementing plans. This indicates the indifference of Amish Tripathi towards the actual myth of Shiva where he is considered as an Ultimate.

CONCLUSION

Amish Tripathi in his novel *The Immortals of Meluha* has deconstructed the original myth of Shiva which is difficult to be accepted as true and real. Tripathi had portrayed Shiva as a human character who made sarcastic comments on the class system that was prevalent in Meluha. Shiva disliked being hailed and addressed as Lord or Sir in the novel. Tripathi has deconstructed various myths that are prevalent among people. The characters of Shiva, Sati, Nandi, and Neelkanth are deconstructed to portray them as human beings rather than as mythical Gods and Goddesses. Similarly in the post-truth perspective, Tripathi used myth to climb up the social ladder by publishing the mythological novels. He faced both controversies for projecting Lord Shiva as a human and hailed for his creative work in

literature. He suggested that every human being had an inner voice which guided them in their difficult times. When humans listen to their inner voice, they reach the state of God like Shiva. Thus, Amish Tripathi has courageously deconstructed the myth of Lord Shiva in the contemporary Post-Truth Era.

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