
Two extreme Horizons - Sati and Kali: A Revolutionization of Feminism in Amish Tripathi's *Shiva Trilogy*

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Paper Received on 15-01-2023, Accepted on 01-03-2023,
Published on 02-03-23;DOI:10.36993/RJOE.2023.8.1.195

Abstract

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This is core of Indian culture and mythology. India has ever been having its roots in rich soil of tales, scriptures and rituals. It is a land of multilingualism and pluralism. Celebrating the theme of unity in diversity, it believes on the concept of 'Vashudhaivkutumbkam'. It is like a vast ocean where rivers of all ideologies and religions are existing with harmony. In words of Devdutt Pattanaik "your truth, my truth", all are getting space in mythological writings of India. It is beauty of this land that in spite of having thirty-six crore gods and goddesses, a clear rill of fraternity is flowing. Nature at its both extreme ends is worshipped. Ram turns into Rudra to show the diversification of nature as well as Sati turns into Kali to prove her presence. In ultra-modern world of this day, all diversified aspects of female nature are studied with great force. Divakaruni is also a mastermind in *Palace of illusion*, in the depiction of Draupadi's character. *Sita: The Warrior of Mithila* of Amish Tripathi has also altered the pages of history. Feministic study of text has given a new life to feminine characters and Kali has got

the same respect as of Sati. Sati is a product of her father's quest for some respect and Kali becomes a prey to all circumstances created by Daksha. But it is their generous nature that they have never let their sincere self, get destroyed in these situations. It has been a tradition in Indian culture that abstract ideas are being studied in the form of some mythological stories through some live characters as it's a land of intellectuals. Sati and Kali both represents two extremely different virtues and this transformation is due to situations they face.

Keywords: Exreme horizons, Revolutionization, Feminism, scriptures

Introduction

"Woman is the earth, air, ether, sound; woman is the microcosm of mind, the woman is fire ... for it is she, the universe."

These lines of Raja Rao present the meaning of being a woman. Not only Rao but many writers both male and female

tried to portray female figure in words. They depicted the depth of human psyche in the glimpses of an age-old myth. In mythology, female counterparts never stand as subordinate to male, unless they are portrayed more liberally. It is a matter of great honor that Indian Goddess are independent in their actions and stand as mirror to present day feminism. Sati to Draupadi and Ahilya to Aishwarya, all move freely and present different shades of human psyche. The new emerging trend of mythology has revolutionized the concept of feminism. In 21st century where female have to raise their voice for their rights, all mythological characters are standing as an ideal for them. Today feminism is searching its roots in myths as Gérard Genette claims- "written narrative exists in space..." Indian mythological chutney with flavor of modern techniques and feminine sensibility is creating wonder. It seems mythological brigade of writers have dipped their pen in their ancestor's blood.

Amish Tripathi, a new face with piercing eyes has acclaimed luck with his books. He, a voice of Indian sensibility with his elegant story telling in *Shiva Trilogy* has deftly delved into the character of Indian macho man, Shiva and has pictured his varied experiences and idiosyncrasies with great versatility. His stupendous works- *The Immortals of Meluha*, *The Secret of the Nagas*, *The Oath of the Vayuputras* show his hard-earned skill and devotion in this supreme power. Shiva's character emerges only in light of all his followers who surrounds him

always. Amish has a unique way of portraying his characters with all human emotions and they just become an epitome of humanity. He himself says in an interview that his female characters are more powerful and he portrayed them with more force. In *Shiva Trilogy*, there are many female characters who leave an everlasting impression and paved the new way for feminine study. His female characters seem an epitome of Indian culture. First time, he has presented the real bond between two female hearts- Sati and Kali, Sati and Kritika and gave a new direction to feministic study. Sati, in Indian mythology is depicted as a devoted and best counterpart of Shiva. She jumps even in fire of yagna to save honor of her husband. But Sati, according to Amish, is a myriad figure and has her own ideology. She is showing the way to new emerging generation of present day and encourage them in words of Kamala Das,

"I shall someday

Leave the cocoon

You build around me with
morning tea..."

The first meeting between Shiva and Sati occurs when she rides in on a chariot into the courtyard of temple while guiding the horses expertly. Her black hair is tied in a bun but a few impertinent strands dances in wind with rhythm of spellbinding kathak. She has piercingly and magnetic blue eyes. Her bronzed skin can make even goddesses jealous. Shiva can imagine and sense the lovely curves that lay beneath her angvastram. Shiva is mesmerized by her flawless face which is

an epitome of concentration. She dismounts the chariot skillfully and with great confidence. A calm confidence spreads on her face while she walks in a dignified way. Shiva's eyes are stuck and fixed to have a look of that beauty. He makes a noble but forceful attempt to slit his glance away from her but in vain. Shiva can breathe again only when she gets away from his sight. After a while when she returns and has conversation with Shiva, she also feels the sincerity in his voice. This is first encounter of Shiva and Naga Lokadhish- Ganesha too. After the attackers have been forced to draw back, Shiva again senses that attraction towards Sati. With embarrassment in her eyes, Sati tries to be polite. Shiva in excitement mashes up the scene and invites Sati for a duel. He loses though the filter of judgement and says, "You are a very good swordsman. I mean a swordswoman. In fact, you are quite a woman..." (TIOM 54). But Shiva does not know the complete picture of 'Vikarma'. They are literally well-thought-out untouchables due to some abnormalities, which according to Meluhans, are the consequence of past sins of the concerned person. Sati is also declared 'Vikarma' because she had given birth to a stillborn. Shiva is also conversed that Sati's husband sank soon after Sati's delivery. It is the hardness and strength of Sati's character that attracts Shiva and he is mesmerized on her. Shiva has washed out all the poison from her life and she becomes an enlightened soul.

Beauty of her persona springs out in these words to Kritika when she

convinces her about the urgency to go to Icchawar, "My son will understand, He would do the same. I am a Kshatriya. It is my dharma to protect the weak. Dharma comes before anything else" (TSOTN 193). Sati is not superstitious. She has an acute sense of judgment. When in Icchawar, headman of village rebukes priest Suryaksh for his inefficiency to keep away the evil spirit of animals by puja, she responds that it is not the puja that will drive them away, they have marked their territory in his village. There is no option left, whether to flee or fight. She is dumb struck at the superstition of poor village cleaner who is willing to sacrifice himself and his family to save villagers.

Sati has the curiousness of a child. She is constantly speculating over the injustice and terror spread by Nagas in Meluha. She asks Kali about it. She has observed her well and finds "You are good people. I've seen the way you treat Ganesh and your men. You are tough, but fair" (TIOM 253), apparently no reason of terrorizing people. Her notion regarding Nagas starts changing after having an encounter with them. Kali is so just that she accepts the blame on their people as her own. Kali says with pride, "My people work according to my orders, didi. If you want to blame them, then you cannot absolve me. Think once again. No innocents were killed in our attacks" (TIOM 253).

The bond of love and understanding between Shiva and Sati is so deep that She never has a doubt on his decision. He has a sense of praise for her deadly accuracy as a

warrior. She even convinces Ganesha about his acceptance by society and as well as by Shiva. She is strong on her decision. Her sense of justice does not allow her to leave Kali and Ganesha this time. She is ready to abandon this society for them and clears to Kali, "You are my sister. I don't care what society says. If they accept me, they will accept you. If they reject you, I leave this society too" (TSOTN 243). This is grand character and nature of Sati. She is a real devotee of Shri Ram and accepts his all rules heartedly. His love and affection for Sati has surpassed every boundary. After getting information about an attack on her, he instantly makes his mind to sail as fast as he can. He convinces his sons "I know she's alive. She cannot die without me" (TOOTV 337). He has a big heart and his words give some solace to Sati. He rebukes her on being so hard to herself. He assures her "It's not your fault. There are usually enough tragedies in life that we are genuinely responsible for... But there is no point in burdening your heart with guilt over events that are not your fault" (ibid 339). Sati has a strange devotion on the words of Shiva. She denies any cosmetic surgery. She smiles and tells Ayurvati "Shiva keeps telling me I'm as beautiful as ever, scar or no scar. I know I look horrendous. He's lying because he loves me. But I choose to believe it" (ibid 346). Shiva has given confidence to Sati. It is not body that matters but the deeds. Shiva has an eye to see the eternal beauty of Sati. During his visit to Pariha, Quick wit Shiva instantly recognizes Tara and the news of Brahaspati being alive converts

Scheherazade into Tara again. Many minor details of everyday life as style of ancient Parihan salute by putting left hand on the heart with open fist are covered well by Amish Tripathi.

Sati has a quick understanding of things. When Shiva is raged at receiving help from Vasudevs in form of Naga medicine, Sati soothes him by saying that it must be necessary to save their child for the common cause. They are helping him and saving him from being scattered. The chief guide of Vasudev pandit Gopal, from Ujjain at Matsya Temple, also praises Sati and says, "Your wife is wise, great Mahadev. It is rare to find such beauty and wisdom in one person" (TSOTN 256). She as a caring wife comes forward and responds Daksha too, "Father, Shiva is very tired. It has been a long journey. May he rest for some time?" (TIOM 378) when he is going to announce Neelkanth in Ayodhya. She knows the inner turmoil of Shiva and does not want to bother him much. She is in favor of truth only and tells Surapadman, "There is nobility in truth even if it hurts" (TOOTV 179). She has a great skill in war. For superb defensive position, she chooses a hill to encamp on the bank of Saraswati and plans to make a Chakravyuh as first line of defense with Vasudev elephants in the battle against Meluha.

Her strength of character comes out in contrast of sadness over globalization of vices and pleasure at the surviving intimacies of virtues in Meluha. Her beauty is in eyes of Shiva, that will never shrivel like Cleopatra-

“Age cannot wither

Nor custom stale her infinite variety”(Chapter V)

She, in spite of getting all the pleasure of life, is not a ‘Touch me not’ girl. She is a brave soul who is adamant in her decision, an extreme caring and lovable wife, a responsible citizen, a skilled swordsman with a warrior spirit, dare to take the responsibility of her deeds, fearless and bounded to follow all rules, a pure and eternal energy too. She is really an epitome of a modern woman and showing a mirror to present day advance feminism.

Kali, the queen of Nagas is revealed to be the younger sister of Sati in Amish Tripathi *Shiva Trilogy*. There was a custom in Swadeep and Meluha that deformed children had no place in that land. They are regarded as cursed people or Nagas and sent to live in the cursed land beyond the Narmada (river) into the distant forests called ‘Panchavati’. Kali is the younger daughter of Meluhan king Daksha who sends her into lifelong exile in Panchvati, without being noticed by anybody. According to Meluhan decree, the woman who gives birth to a Naga (deformed child) has to be expatriated into the cursed land with that child. Daksha somehow succeeds in keeping the secret of Kali’s birth and directs her to forest so that Veerini, the queen of Meluha need not go to Panchvati with her. Later, all secrets are exposed. Sati meets her sister Kali and son Ganesh in Icchavar. Kali has a different point of view regarding the sinners. She is in favor of giving punishment to them. Like lord of the people, she has no soft

corner. She is righteous in her approach. She rebukes all when majority is going in direction of withdrawing help from Brangas. She asks, “Is that how Nagas will work from now on... Abandoning a friend when not needed?” (ibid 177). All knows that her anger is legendary.

Though she is depicted as the most furious and revengeful yet she has an instinct of motherly love for Ganesh and a weakness for him. She as a woman is the other half of Sati and represents womanhood. As Eliade has said in *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries*:

...when the Earth becomes the goddess of Death, it is simply because she is felt to be the universal womb, the inexhaustible source of all creation... The frightening aspect of the Earth-Mother, as the Goddess of Death, is explained by the cosmic necessity of sacrifice, which alone makes the passage from one mode of being to another and also ensures the uninterrupted circulation of life.

Ganesha is running out in a quest behind Sati and Kali knows it. She says that nothing will be gained from this futile attempt of chasing her. She names it ‘a foolhardy quest’. He wants answer of his questions. He thinks whatever may be the answer, it will complete him and gives him peace. She even has an eye on all the activities and as a queen she has a strong system of information. She tells Ganesh, “I am the Queen of the Nagas, my child,” she interrupted ‘I have more than one piece on

the chessboard” (TIOM 241). She knows that Ganesh is constantly wandering in search of some questions and his quest will be fulfilled only when he will encounter Sati. She is not in a mood to leave Ganesh alone when he is troublesome by Sati's presence at Bal-Atibalkund. She thinks that “the presence of that vile woman had disturbed his usual calm demeanour” (TSOTN 27) and he is taking unnecessary risks if he does not want to kill her. She knows his pain and suffering. So, she whispers quietly in her nephew's earshot, “Let it go, my child. It's not worth it. Let it go” (ibid 28). She identifies the will power of Ganesh, so she leaves him there with some bodyguards and rides towards Panchavati. Many a times, she tries to counsel Ganesh. But she is in favor of taking all precautions. She is not the blind follower. She thinks practically and plans to take Shiva and his followers through Branga to Panchavati. This will not weaken their defenses. She is intelligent and quick wit. When she proposes Shiva to see the secret of Nagas and moves to Panchvati. Shiva can see no malice and deceit in Kali's eyes. He feels that he can trust her. Shiva wants a non-formal relation with her and prefers to listen from her as Shiva, not as Neelkanth. While she leads Shiva entourage to Panchvati, she commands soldiers in high pitch. Sati gets impressed with her words and says that she has a way with words. She is now fully confident on Shiva and tells him jokingly, she has no threat if he is with her. Devi Annapurna, the goddess of food in mythological texts is considered another form of Parvati.

When Shiva mocks at Parvati setting of kitchens at Kailash and denies the necessity of food, Parvati goes away. She sets her kitchen at Kashi and starts feeding the hungry ones. Shiva's ganas when cry with hunger, he realizes the necessity of food. He reaches Kashi, spreads his bowl in front of Devi Annapurna and she fills it with affection. Kali also refers her and says, “We Nagas believe Devi Annapurna, the goddess of food, is one of our collective mothers” (ibid 334). In this way, she worships the benign form of nature, Devi Annapurna. Kali worships the nurturing form of nature and establishes the value of demure Sati.

Kali has both extremes, frightening aspect as well as motherly affection. She has special affection for Ganesh as she has nurtured him like a mother. Rage of Kali is popular among Nagas so nobody dares to oppose her. Karkotak, Prime Minister to the Queen of the Nagas immediately gets silent when she responds, “When I want your advice, Karkotak...I will ask for it” (ibid 26-27). He is terrified of queen's temper. Kali is so furious by nature that she even challenges Daksha when he confronts her first time. She dishonors him and roars, “I am in the mood to challenge you to an Agnipariksha right now, you repulsive goat!” (ibid 305). Her repressed anger springs out like volcano. Lord Bhrgu compares her anger with Lord Rudra's legendary rage. She stands in contrast to Sati and as Devdutt Pattanaik reveals “Culture is the domesticated Gauri; but nature is the sovereign Kali. Both are forms of Shakti, the Goddess”(Pattanaik,

WST 54). In a short span with Shiva, she is changed a lot. She starts developing respect for him and calls her 'Neelkanth'. She apprehends now "When logic fails, faith can serve a purpose"(Tripathi, SWM 15). She is so influenced by his persona that she starts dreaming. Shiva has a very magnetic personality. So, everyone who comes in contact of him, gets influenced by him. Even the most furious and angry Kali thinks, "How different would my life have been if fate had blessed me with a man like Shiva. Maybe like didi, all the poison could have been sucked out of my life as well. Perhaps, even I would have found happiness and peace" (ibid 311). She trusts him with her life. And so, she agrees to take him to Panchvati. In mythological stories where Kali is depicted as aggressive form of Sati, Amish Tripathi presents her as carbon copy of Sati and her naga sister. Amish depicts her as, "Standing in front of Shiva was a splitting image of Sati. Her eyes, face, build — everything. Except that her skin was a jet black to Sati's bronze. Her hair open, unlike Sati who usually restrained her flowing tresses" (ibid 272). Pattanaik agrees and explains Kali as aggressive form of Sati "She became the dark-complexioned Kali, wild and unbound"(Pattanaik, SIRB 71).

Like the mythological Kali of Pattanaik who is said as, "You are so dark. You are Kali, the black one, black as coal, black as the night sky, black as a crow, black as the pit of death"(Pattanaik, SAI 34). She is represented as the dark and belligerent form of bright and radiant Parvati. Amish is in favor of depicting the

mythical figures as genuine and real. So, Kali is also painted as a Naga queen, carbon copy of Sati, bear a furious and dreadful look, quick in temper but easy to please. Both Sati and Kali stand as the Ruth and Pilate of Morrison when she says, "They were so different, these two women. One black, the other lemony. One corseted, the other buck naked under her dress. One well-read but ill travelled. The other had read only a geography book" (SSL 19) but it goes in a different context. She has a talent of playing with words. Like a venturesome leader, she addresses all and warns them not to dare discover Dandak Forest during night because they are more vicious than beautiful. She says that she would rather be slow than dead while crossing this dreadful forest. Sati smiles at her and says, "You have a way with words, sister" (TSOTN 333). But it is not just a play of words, these are the sparkles of her wisdom. She has confronted the bleakest side of life and with a sigh she tells Veerbhadra, "If only life was that simple!" (ibid 337). A person when comes out from the toil and turmoil of life, gets the solidity of words. Though she has developed a rude pragmatism as a defense mechanism in her nature. Her bitterness is exposed when she says that history is written by victors and they can write it however they wish. It is important for her to ensure the victory, not the means of attaining it. She has a different definition of myth. When the victim escapes to the remote land and leads a powerless life, their life experiences are dismissed as myth. She has a genuine heart

also. She gives Naga medicine to king Athithigva for his sister Maya to relieve her pain.

Like an angel she works but denies to take credit. Her simplicity is reflected in his words, "I'm no angel. If the Parmatma had any sense of justice, he wouldn't make an innocent person like Maya suffer so much. I'm doing all I can to set right his injustices" (TOOTV 218). She is very quick tempered. When she comes to know of Meluhans heading towards Narmada and an attack on Panchavati is assumed by her, her rage for Shiva and Sati gets high. She yells on Sati for leaving Parvateshwar and decides in hurry to sail with fifty ships to save Panchavati. She in anger responds "Didi, one who clings to moral arrogance even at the cost of the lives of others, is not necessarily the most moral person" (ibid 418). She is anxious for the safety of her people. She announces that her people will not suffer for Sati's addiction to moral glory. She has no faith on Daksha and his peace conference. Her anger reaches at peak even at an idea of hurting Sati at Devagiri. "I don't trust that goat of a man. If he hurts my sister, I will burn his entire city to a cinder, with him in it", (ibid 443) says she. Her anger is uncontrollable when she gets the news of brutal murder of Sati. She suggests to burn the entire city with every citizen in it. She argues harshly with Bhagirath if he wants to save any other one from the destruction of Pashupati'sra. Kali is given a great job by her mother. Veerini tells her to find out and punish the real culprit behind this crime.

She makes fun of Ganesh for believing in the legend of Neelkanth. Ganesh leaves his share of Naga medicine and gives it for the safe birth of Kartik. She sniggers at this decision of Ganesh and utters, "It's true that the gods don't give all abilities to one person. You truly are your own worst enemy" (ibid 141). However hard hearted she may appear from outside, her care for Ganesh is never overlooked. She has a special affection for him and so, she gets ready to go with him to Kashi. She sends a clear warning to king Chandraketu, not to show the way to Panchavati to Neelkanth if he wants Naga medicine. She says that Neelkanth can only offer him 'Promises'. Kali has taken experience of migration, expatriation, striving to succeed at abroad land and yearning for her homeland and family. Like Das' declaration "I am Indian, very brown .../I speak three languages, write in /Two, dream on one" She knows only one language and that is of survival in any condition. Sati and Kali are connected with one string and that is Shiva. Devdutt Pattanaik says that it is Shiva who has transformed Kali into Shakti. They both presents two totally different virtues, peace and anger, white and black, nurture and destroy, milk and blood. All these symbols show their contrary nature in its extreme. It is interesting to note here that both are necessary to maintain a balance in nature. At both ends, Kali and Sati are reflecting the two extreme horizons and represent the revolutionization of feminism in Amish Tripathi's Shiva Trilogy.

Conclusion

Sati and Kali in *Shiva Trilogy* of Amish are presented as the both sides of the same coin. Both have some unique qualities but are distinct in their attitude and behavior. Sati presents the benign and nurturing side of nature and Kali depicts the aggressive and destructive way of it. In mythological texts, though both are depicted as the different forms of Shakti. Amish has amalgamated it with his genuine skill and presented them as replica of each other. In anger Sati becomes Kali and in her most nurturing form Kali has a motherly affection for Ganesha like Sati. They present the extreme horizons. But there is one common thing between them, their faith in Shiva, affection for their dear ones, strength of character. They have given new interpretation to new emerging concept of feminism. To give a full meaning of feminism, there is required not only the nurturing form of females but a destructive and fearsome form is needed too, to make the circle complete.

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How to cite this article?

Dr.Seema Devi “ Two extreme Horizons - Sati and Kali: A Revolutionization of Feminism in Amish Tripathi’s Shiva Trilogy”Research Journal Of English(RJOE)8(1),PP:198-207,2023, DOI:10.36993/RJOE.2023.8.1.207