



Saarth

E-Journal of Research

E-mail: sarthejournal@gmail.com
www.sarthejournal.com

ISSN NO: 2395-339X
Peer Reviewed
Vol.7, Issue.4 No.04

Impact Factor: 6.89
Quarterly
Oct. to Dec. - 2022

The Need and Importance of Retelling Indian Epics to the Masses

***Anjali M. Machhi**

ABSTRACT:

The basic foundation of many societies and civilizations is mythology. The classical mythology of Greek and Roman culture served as the foundation for the western world, but for India, the focus is on the rich heritage of its own mythology, which is both culturally and religiously considerably more dynamic. The retelling, refolding, and revisiting of mythology have been heavily highlighted in this project, which demonstrates the perspective of women in particular. Additionally, it describes how women's roles are evolving in contemporary culture. The Mahabharata and the Ramayana are the two main epics that significantly affected Indian culture. For this essay, I found the Mahabharata to be engaging and persuasive. By contrasting the myths from the Mahabharata, aims to comprehend the retellings contextually, including the formal decisions each one makes and why, how they are articulated in light of new demands and resources, how they relate to earlier retellings produced after liberalization, and where each one stands within its own cultural context. The paper contends that in order to comprehend the forms and modes in which the Mahabharata story is still told today, it is important to dig into and highlight the retellings, as well as their many aesthetics and networks of production and distribution.

(*Anjali M Machhi, Research Scholar, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Faculty of Arts, Parul University, Vadodra, Gujarat, India. E-mail/Contact: anjaliben.machhi19818@paruluniversity.ac.in/ 7383023928)

KEYWORDS: Myth, Mythology, Contemporary Literature, Retellings, Postmodern

I. INTRODUCTION

For writers and readers from all over the world, myths and mythology—a story or collection of stories assembled as an epic or a Purana—have served as both a source of intrigue and inspiration. Various tales from Indian mythology have been passed down through the generations, either orally or via written sources, and records of the same were meticulously preserved. The most potent teachings are conveyed to readers through the tales of Indian mythology, which also have a positive impact on their personalities. Indian mythological stories are intended to provide nuanced information, guidelines, and laws that should govern our daily life. Usually, there are several explanations for the same fact, event, or festival, each of which is valid in its own right. The legends have been passed down through the ages as a result of natural progression. While adding local flavor in the form of language, iconography, etc., stories borrowed from the Vedas, Puranas, and Itihasas preserve their original meaning despite geographic changes.

These stories have received a spectacular reaction in the Indian literary market. These stories have not only attracted a following of voracious readers but also established themselves as a legacy of Indian culture, preserving it with each new telling. We can observe that mythology has gained popularity in both English literature and Indian television series, which dramatize and fictionalize ancient stories. Even though the original source and the historical narrative are the same, the style and approach have evolved, reflecting the particularities of our time.

They began legendary rituals that later served as the cornerstone of a fundamentalist version of Hinduism. The mythology evolved when Aryans interacted with the people and cultures of the Indian subcontinent over time. Hinduism is introduced in stages, each of which can be accompanied by the most significant writings still extant from that era. The Vedas are linked to the earliest stages of the oldest Indian archives. One of these, the Rig-Veda, consists of 1,028 hymns² that all allude to tales. The outmoded Aryan tradition considers the verbally transmitted Vedas. The Brahmanas were the next group to gather, between 900 and 700 B.C. The Brahmanas contain many myths, despite the fact, their concern is primarily with Hinduism's practices. The Mahabharata and the Ramayana, two outstanding Hindu epics³ that were written sometime between 300 B.C. and 300 A.D., contain tales about numerous deities⁴, while the Upanishads were written around 700 B.C. What is more typically communicated through myths is this. As a result, the books are known as Puranas, or "Stories of the Old Days," where Hindu mythology and religion first appeared.

The majority of the stories in this place are dedicated to a deity. A grotesque collection of gods, bad spirits, demigods⁵, mortals, and creatures inhabit Hindu mythology. The Mahabharata frequently recounts earlier myths and even refers to the Gods. The true trick of rebirth, often known as the transmigration of souls, is one of them. Every spirit is suitable for some lives, according to Hindu belief. The

spirit is conceived by another living body either after the decay of one body or upon reincarnation.

II. **Ramayana**

One of the most well-known epics in Hindu literature is the **Ramayana**, which recounts the daring exploits of the legendary hero Ram, who is revered as a deity in many regions of India. The Ramayana is assigned to Valmiki, a man whose intelligence and higher ideals appear as characters in the work. Valmiki is thought to have authored the Ramayana around 200 B.C. The Ramayana, which is based on multiple narratives, also incorporates sacred text from the Vedas, a collection of ancient Hindu religious teachings. The Ramayana claims that Ram was the seventh manifestation of the god Vishnu; Ram received some of Vishnu's divine abilities, while his siblings gave him the remainder. He was conceived when Vishnu gave three of King Dasaratha of Ajodhya's wives a unique concoction to ingest. He was born as the eldest son of the king of Ajodhya. The magnificent epic Ramayana contains a number of anecdotes that focus on the valiant actions of Ram and his three brothers. For instance, the tale of Taraka's slaughter was pretty well known to them when they were young boys.

Ram and Sita got married, and soon after, King Dasaratha decided to abdicate his throne in favor of Ram. In any case, Dasaratha's wife Kaikeyi, the mother of Bharata, reminded him of his previous promise to grant her two wishes. The king reluctantly complied with Kaikeyi's requests to banish Ram and install Bharata as king. The bravery was also seen in the court of King Janaka, where Ram repeatedly broke Lord Shiva's powerful bow and won the match in Sita's Swayamvar. Despite Ram's heroic deeds, the Ramayana also tells the story of a woman's journey from princess Janaki to queen Sita. The valor of the three brothers, notably Lakshmana's, has also been emphasized in the Ramayana, which is not just about elucidating Ram and Sita. The Ramayana also has a lesser-known tale of Urmila, Lakshmana's wife. Her fourteen years of existence are just sacrificed while she waits for her husband. As is well known, Ram and Lakshmana saved countless ecosystems during their exile. For instance, Surpanakha, a disgusting giant monster, offered to marry Ram and Lakshmana. The giantess tried to attack Sita when they refused, but the brothers cut off Surpanakha's ears and nose and packed her away. Surpanakha dispatched her Ram and Lakshmana defeated her younger brother Khara and an army of demons who came to avenge her. and killed every one of them. And from this point, the epic Ramayana fight to save Sita from the powerful Ravana, Surpanakha's demon brother. Ram was unsure upon their reconnection whether Sita had remained obedient while being held under Ravana's control. Sita declared her goodness and demonstrated it by surviving a fire unscathed. The fire god Agni also discussed her assistance and Ram saw that she was innocent.

Ram started a thorough management of peace and prosperity as soon as the couple arrived back in Ajodhya. However, the populace continued to question Sita's

loyalty. Ram eventually began to question her innocence as well and exiled her. Ram's twin sons Kush and Lava were born to Sita while she was in exile while seeking safety with an elderly sage named Valmiki. The two lads finally made it to Ajodhya after many years. Ram recognized them as his sons when he saw them and asked Sita to return from exile. Once more claiming her innocence, Sita returned. She made a request of Mother Earth to attest to her veracity. In reaction, Sita was sucked up by the earth, which split open beneath her. Ram prayed to the gods for relief from his grief after Sita's death. Ram was instructed by the gods to either ascend to heaven or remain on earth. Ram entered the Sarayu River and drowned because he made the decision to follow Sita forever. Brahma, the god, greeted Ram when he died and welcomed him to heaven.

This tale is typically presented to demonstrate that there is a Ramayana for every such Ram. The quantity of Ramayanas and the breadth of their effect over the past 25 centuries or more throughout South and South East Asia are striking. Anamnese, Balinese, Bengali, Cambodians, Chinese, Gujrati, Javanese, Kennard, Kashmiri, Bhutanese, Laotian, Malaysian, Marathi, Oriya, Prakrit, Sanskrit, Santali, Sinhalese, Tamil, Telugu, Thai, and Tibetan are among the languages and dialects in which the Ram and Sita story is found. These languages have recited the Ramayana in a number of different ways over the years. More than twenty more Ramayana stories in diverse narrative genres can be found in Sanskrit alone. A student named Camille Buckle counted 300 people telling the Ramayana. The essay "Three Hundred Ramayana: Five instances and Three Thoughts on Translation" explains how the Ramayana's storytelling differs in different civilizations. According to the article, there are various renditions of the Ramayana found around the world, but they vary in how the characters are portrayed and how the story is told. Despite having comparable characters to the original Ramayana of Valmiki, the storylines relating to the characters are different.

III. **Mahabharata**

The **Mahabharata** is a sacred Hindu work that is considered to be both the world's longest poem and a fundamental Indian epic. It is made up of a variety of myths and tales centered on the conflicts between two wings of a fabled crew. Cosmology, logic, and religious doctrine are all present in the tales of gods, demigods, and saints. The area of the epic is referred to as The Bhagavad Gita is considered to be Hinduism's most important sacred text. The Bhagwat Gita is regarded as the holy scripture of Hinduism. The Mahabharata is said to have been written by an ancient teacher by the name of Veda Vyasa, but it was very certainly produced by a number of individual poets before being combined into a single work sometime between 400 B.C. and 200 A.D. The epic took on its current form roughly 200 years later. It has almost 100,000 verses and is broken up into 18 parts, or Parvan.

The Mahabharata's storylines take place in the Kurukshetra empire on India's northern plains. The initial Parvans shed light on the creation of the main characters and the setting that supported the epic's core struggle. The conflict begins when Dritaraastra, the legitimate heir to the Kurukshetra throne, is ignored in favor of his younger brother Pandu. Dritaraastra is a visually challenged monarch. But instead of ascending to the throne, Pandu leaves Dritaraastra in charge and retreats to the Himalayan Mountains to live alone. The two wings of the family began to separate before Pandu departed Kurukshetra as a result of the births of five offspring by each of his two spouses and one hundred children by the senior sibling Dritaraastra. The 100 sons of Dritaraastra, also known as the Kauravas, who dwelt in the royal courtyard with the Pandavas, the son of Pandu, became famous. When the Pandavas reached adulthood, the older brother Yudhishtira demanded power from his uncle and insisted that he was the rightful inheritor.

The Kauravas eventually forced their cousins into exile after a family feud erupted. As a result of familial strife, the Kauravas were forced to force the Pandavas into exile in the forest. The Pandavas took part in a contest to win the hand of the charming princess Draupadi when they were being shunned. The Kauravas also participated in the competition, but Arjuna, one of the Pandava siblings, ultimately prevailed and earned the princess' hand. She then served as the wife of all five Pandavas. Following the contest, King Dhritarashtra invited the Pandavas to his palace where he divided the kingdom between them and his son Kaurava. Due to these agreements, the Kauravas challenged the Pandavas to a game of ivories and obtained the entire kingdom via duplicitous means. After all, was said and done, the Pandavas were forced into exile. The Pandavas were banished once more by force. After a long period of

The Kauravas refused to help the Pandavas when they returned to regain the kingdom after their wandering. both sides made preparations for war after giving up authority. The Pandavas were supported by the god Krishna, a descendant of both the Pandavas and the Kauravas. He did not participate in the fighting, but he drove the Pandava brother Arjuna's chariot and gave him instructions. The dialogue between them is what is known as the Bhagavad Gita on the battlefield in the Mahabharata. Only a small amount of the Mahabharata is concerned with the fight between the Pandavas and the Kauravas. The work covers a vast array of topics and includes various different stories about saints and deities. The stories convey intricate intellectual ideas that help to define the Hindu faith and many sets of moral and ethical norms, as well as the monetary capabilities of the period. The Mahabharata became incredibly well-known in India and throughout Southeast Asia. Numerous ancient pieces of art, including Indian miniature paintings and the intricate sculptures found at the Cambodian temples of Angkor Watt and Angkor Thorn, were influenced by the work.

VI. REFERENCES

1. Mishra, Suchi Smita. *Women Identity and Self-Assertion: A Study of Two Contemporary Retellings of Mahabharata*. Diss. 2015.
2. Vandana, D. Interpretations and Reinterpretations of Ramayana and the Scion of Ikshvaku. Union Christian College, 3-6
3. Singh, V. Modern Retelling of Indian Myths: A Study of Rehashing Mythology through Popular Fiction (2017).
4. Akila, K. An epic retelling. The Hindu. (2016, December 05).