

Amish Tripathi as a Tolkien of India

Gopal Jaysing Rathod¹, Dr. J. M. Saboo²

Submitted: 15- Mar -2026 Revised: 20 -Mar-2026 Accepted: 15 Apr 2026 Published: 30-Apr-2026

Manuscript ID:

IJEWLPSIR-2026-030226



Creative Commons (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0):

This is an open access journal, and articles are distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International Public License, which allows others to remix, tweak, and build upon the work no commercially, as long as appropriate credit is given and the new creations are licensed under the identical terms.

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.23432004

DOI Link:

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23432004>

Volume: 3

Issue: 2

Month: April 2026

E-ISSN: 3065-7873

¹Researcher Deapartment of English, Dr. H. N. Sinha Arts & Commerce College, Patur Dist. Akola (Maharashtra).

²Research Guide, Principal, Shankarlal Khandelwal Arts. Science and Commerce College, Akola
Email: gopalrathods72@gmail.com

How to cite this article:

Rathod, G. J., & Saboo, J. M. (2026). Amish Tripathi as a Tolkien of India. *International Journal of English and World Languages & Literature Paradigm Shift in International Research*, 3(2), 96–98.

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23432004>

Address for correspondence:

Gopal Jaysing Rathod
Researcher Deapartment of English, Dr. H. N. Sinha Arts & Commerce College, Patur Dist. Akola (Maharashtra).
Email: gopalrathods72@gmail.com

Abstract

Amish Tripathi is a celebrated Indian author, widely recognized for his acclaimed Shiva Trilogy, which includes *The Immortals of Meluha*, *The Secret of the Nagas*, and *The Oath of the Vayuputras*. These novels have earned immense popularity for their engaging narrative style and innovative retelling of Indian mythology. This research paper examines the assertion that Amish Tripathi can be regarded as the "Tolkien of India." The Shiva Trilogy and the Ram Chandra Series present a remarkable fusion of mythology and history. His writings are deeply rooted in religious thought, philosophical inquiry, and the timeless conflict between the forces of good and evil. In the Shiva Trilogy, Tripathi intertwines these themes with Hindu mythology, drawing upon the concept of the divine trinity—Brahma, the creator; Vishnu, the preserver; and Shiva, the destroyer. The characters in the novels closely resemble figures from Hindu mythology while being reimagined in a contemporary narrative framework. The story portrays two ancient civilizations, the Meluhan and Swadeep empires, locked in an enduring struggle for supremacy. Shiva aligns himself with the Meluhans, who represent the Suryavanshi lineage, and ultimately leads them to victory by overcoming the Chandravanshis.

Keywords: Religion, mythology, victory, recreation, retelling, contemporary, timeless, civilization

Introduction

Born on 18 October 1974 in Mumbai, the commercial capital of India, Amish Tripathi has emerged as one of the most celebrated contemporary Indian authors through his bestselling works, particularly the *Shiva Trilogy* and the *Ram Chandra Series*. Raised in a deeply religious family with roots in Varanasi (Banaras), a city revered as one of the holiest centres of Hinduism and closely associated with Lord Shiva, Tripathi developed a strong interest in Hindu philosophy and mythology from an early age. His father was an architect employed with Larsen & Toubro (L&T), while his grandfather was a distinguished Sanskrit scholar and priest in Varanasi. Tripathi has often acknowledged that his parents and grandparents, who were devoted followers of Hinduism, nurtured his understanding of Indian theology, mythology, and cultural traditions. This rich spiritual and cultural upbringing later became the foundation of his literary imagination. A music enthusiast, Tripathi currently resides in Mumbai with his wife and son, Neel. Although he never intended to become a writer in his youth, he pursued management studies at the Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Kolkata, and later worked as the National Head of Marketing and Product Manager at IDBI Federal Life Insurance. After beginning his professional career in banking and corporate management, he eventually resigned to devote himself entirely to writing. His debut literary venture, the *Shiva Trilogy*—comprising *The Immortals of Meluha*, *The Secret of the Nagas*, and *The Oath of the Vayuputras*—established him as one of India's most influential popular novelists. Amish Tripathi is frequently compared to J.R.R. Tolkien because of his remarkable ability to create expansive fictional worlds rooted in mythology, history, and cultural traditions. Just as Tolkien developed the legendary world of Middle-earth by drawing upon European myths and folklore, Tripathi reconstructs ancient India by blending historical imagination with Hindu mythology. Both writers are renowned for their detailed world-building, memorable characters, and vivid narrative style, which immerse readers in richly imagined civilizations. Their novels explore universal themes such as morality, heroism, destiny, sacrifice, and the eternal struggle between good and evil. Owing to these literary similarities, many critics and readers have described Tripathi as the "Tolkien of India." His *Shiva Trilogy* has achieved extraordinary commercial and critical success, selling more than five million copies and being translated into numerous Indian and international languages, thereby introducing Indian mythology to a global readership. The *Shiva Trilogy* consists of three interconnected novels, each tracing the remarkable transformation of Shiva from an extraordinary human leader into a revered deity. The first novel, *The Immortals of Meluha*, published in February 2010, is set in the fictional empire of Meluha, believed to have been founded by Lord Rama.

The narrative presents Shiva as a tribal warrior from Tibet who arrives in Meluha and is identified as the prophesied Neelkanth, destined to protect the kingdom. Rather than portraying him as a divine being from the outset, Tripathi humanizes Shiva as a courageous leader whose wisdom, compassion, and military abilities gradually shape his destiny. During his journey, Shiva falls in love with Sati, whose character becomes central to both his personal life and his moral evolution.

The second installment, *The Secret of the Nagas*, was released on 12 August 2011 and continues the story from the conclusion of the first novel. Shiva embarks on a mission to rescue Sati from the mysterious Nagas while uncovering the hidden truths surrounding them. His search leads him across the eastern regions of Branga and ultimately to the Naga capital of Panchavati, where unexpected revelations challenge his previous beliefs. He discovers that Sati's first child is alive, along with her twin sons, and gradually realizes that appearances can be deceptive and that the Nagas are not the true enemies they were believed to be. Through these discoveries, Tripathi emphasizes themes of justice, prejudice, truth, and compassion. The concluding novel, *The Oath of the Vayuputras*, published on 27 February 2013, brings the trilogy to its dramatic conclusion. Shiva finally uncovers that Somras—the miraculous substance revered by the Meluhans—is the true source of corruption and destruction. Determined to eliminate this evil, he wages a decisive war that culminates in the destruction of the Meluhan capital. With the eradication of Somras, balance is restored, and Shiva's extraordinary actions inspire future generations to worship him as a god. The novel thus completes his symbolic transformation from an exceptional warrior into the divine figure revered in Hindu tradition. Through this reinterpretation, Tripathi successfully combines mythology, history, philosophy, and modern storytelling to present an engaging and thought-provoking narrative. The immense popularity of the *Shiva Trilogy* demonstrates the growing interest of contemporary readers in innovative reinterpretations of Indian mythology. By presenting legendary characters in a realistic historical framework while preserving their philosophical significance, Tripathi bridges the gap between ancient traditions and modern sensibilities. His artistic achievement lies in transforming familiar mythological narratives into compelling works of historical fiction that appeal to both scholarly audiences and general readers. A critical study of these novels reveals their literary richness, thematic complexity, philosophical depth, and significant contribution to contemporary Indian English literature.

Amish Tripathi's Unique Contribution

Although Amish Tripathi is often compared to J.R.R. Tolkien, his literary vision is distinctively rooted in Indian history, mythology, and culture. While both authors create richly imagined worlds inspired by ancient traditions, Tripathi incorporates uniquely Indian social, cultural, and philosophical elements such as caste, religion, governance, and politics into his narratives. His novels not only reinterpret mythological legends but also engage with contemporary issues, including corruption, leadership, justice, gender equality, and social responsibility. Through these themes, Tripathi has inspired a new generation of readers to rediscover India's cultural heritage and philosophical traditions. His writings have encouraged many young Indians to reconnect with their religious and historical roots, fostering a renewed sense of cultural pride and identity. For these reasons, he is frequently referred to as the "Tolkien of India." Explaining his approach to mythology, Tripathi remarks: *"The stories are thousands of years old, but they are so rich, so deeply ingrained in our genes, that we want to hear them over and over again. There can be different interpretations of old stories. The philosophical core remains, the soul remains, but the packaging can be new."* This statement reflects his creative philosophy of preserving the essential spiritual and philosophical values of ancient myths while presenting them in a contemporary narrative style that resonates with modern readers. One of the defining features of Tripathi's fiction is his innovative reimagining of traditional mythological characters. His portrayal of Shiva departs significantly from the conventional divine image, presenting him instead as a courageous Tibetan tribal leader with human strengths and weaknesses. Similarly, his depiction of Sita challenges traditional stereotypes by portraying her as a courageous warrior, an able administrator, and a visionary leader rather than merely an obedient wife. Such reinterpretations make familiar mythological figures more relatable to contemporary audiences while preserving their symbolic significance.

Tripathi's personal beliefs also reflect a practical and compassionate understanding of religion. Speaking about faith, he states: *"I believe faith gives peace. I believe in religious symbols and rituals. I do what gives me peace. I visit a Shiva temple every Monday. Most devotees pour milk over the Shiva lingam; I don't do that. I buy milk and give it to a beggar because that gives me peace. But I don't judge others who pour milk on the lingam."* His perspective emphasizes that true spirituality lies in compassion, tolerance, and personal conviction rather than in ritualistic practices alone. Owing to the remarkable popularity and philosophical depth of his novels, Tripathi has often been compared not only with J.R.R. Tolkien but also with Paulo Coelho. Acknowledging these comparisons, he remarks: *"I'm a fan of both. Paulo Coelho's The Alchemist is one of the best books I've read, and I like Tolkien for the depth of his thinking. But my writing is influenced by our ancient culture, my pride in it. And I'm influenced by all the books I read."* This observation highlights that while he admires international authors, the primary inspiration for his literary works remains India's rich cultural and mythological heritage. Reflecting on his future as a writer, Tripathi expresses his enduring passion for storytelling by saying: *"I have plenty of ideas to write for a lifetime. I'm afraid that I will die before writing them all and I'll carry them into my cremation pyre with me."* This statement illustrates his lifelong commitment to literature and his determination to continue exploring India's vast reservoir of myths, legends, and philosophical traditions. His creative reinterpretation of mythology, combined with compelling storytelling and contemporary relevance, has firmly established him as one of the most influential voices in modern Indian English literature and justified his reputation as the "Tolkien of India."

Conclusion

Amish Tripathi has successfully transformed Indian mythological fiction by presenting ancient legends through a contemporary narrative that appeals to modern readers. His *Shiva Trilogy* demonstrates how mythology can be reinterpreted without compromising its philosophical essence, making timeless stories relevant to present-day society. By portraying Shiva as a courageous yet imperfect human being who gradually evolves into a divine figure, Tripathi humanizes mythology and enables readers to connect emotionally with legendary characters. The comparison of Amish Tripathi with J.R.R. Tolkien is justified because both authors construct richly imagined worlds rooted in their respective cultural traditions. However, Tripathi's literary identity remains distinct, as his narratives are deeply embedded in Indian history, Hindu philosophy, mythology, and socio-political realities. His novels not only retell ancient myths but also engage with contemporary concerns such as corruption, environmental degradation, ethical leadership, religious tolerance, gender equality, nationalism, and the conflict between good and evil. Through this unique blend of mythology, history, and modern sensibility, he has revived interest in India's cultural heritage among younger generations. The *Shiva Trilogy* also illustrates that myths are dynamic cultural narratives capable of evolving with changing times while preserving their philosophical core. Inspired by New Historicist perspectives, Tripathi reimagines the past to comment upon the present, thereby demonstrating that mythology remains a powerful medium for understanding human nature, morality, and civilization. His reinterpretation of Lord Shiva emphasizes that greatness is achieved not by birth but through courage, sacrifice, compassion, and righteous action. Although some critics question the literary sophistication of his writing, there is little doubt about his extraordinary contribution to popular Indian English literature. His ability to recreate ancient myths with historical realism, philosophical depth, and engaging storytelling has attracted millions of readers across the world and established mythology as one of the most successful genres in contemporary Indian fiction. For these reasons, Amish Tripathi occupies a significant place in modern Indian literature and justifiably earns the title of the "Tolkien of India." His works continue to inspire readers to rediscover India's rich mythological and cultural traditions while reflecting on universal questions of identity, justice, duty, and the eternal struggle between good and evil.

Acknowledgment

The researcher expresses sincere gratitude to the Principal, Research Guide, faculty members, and colleagues of Dr. H. N. Sinha Arts & Commerce College, Patur, and Shankarlal Khandelwal Arts, Science and Commerce College, Akola, for their constant encouragement, valuable guidance, and academic support throughout the course of this study.

Financial support and sponsorship

Nil.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

Works Cited:

1. An Interview of Amish Tripathi to *BBC News* on 16,2017
2. Asian Voice.com, News, London, 28 Oct., 2020. Works Cited
3. Adiseshiah, Sian, and Rupert Hildyard, editors. *Introduction: What Happens Now? Twenty-first Century Fiction: What Happens Now*, Palgrave, 2013, pp. 1-13.
4. Brannigan, John. *New Historicism and Cultural Materialism*. Transition series, Macmillan
5. 1998.
6. Pattanaik, Devdutt. *Myth = Mithya: A Handbook of Hindu Mythology*. Penguin Books India,
7. 2008.
8. Tripathi, Amish. *The Immortals of Meluha*. Westland Ltd, 2010.
9. *The Secret of the Nagas*. Westland Ltd, 2011.
10. *The Oath of the Vayuputras*. Westland Ltd, 2013.