Environmental Sustainability in Amish Tripathi's Shiva Trilogy

Daisy Irani Patnaik[1] Dr. Sudeshna Datta Chaudhari[2]

[1]Research Scholar, Department of Humanities, School of Liberal Studies, KIIT Deemed to be University, Bhubaneswar, India

[2]Assistant Professor, Department of Humanities, School of Liberal Studies, KIIT Deemed to be University, Bhubaneswar, India

[1]Doctoral Research Fellow at the Department of Humanities, School of Liberal Studies, KIIT Deemed to be University, Bhubaneswar. Her research interests include Indian mythology, popular literature, speculative fiction, and Feminism. Email - daisy.patnaik@gmail.com ORCID - https://orcid.org/0009-0001-9340-8149

[2]Assistant Professor at the Department of Humanities, School of Liberal Studies, KIIT Deemed to be University, Bhubaneswar. Her research interests include speculative fiction, mythology, translation studies, digital humanities, and Hindustani Classical Music. Email - sdchaudhari@gmail.com ORCID-https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7254-9751

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ABSTRACT:

Contemporary mythological writers reinterpret traditional myths to engage with present-day debates on environmental degradation, sustainability and ethical responsibility. Their works reimagine rivers, forests, mountains and other natural elements as active participants in human history, reinforcing the indigenous belief that environmental well-being is inseparable from human prosperity. Such narratives resonate with the aims of environmental humanities, which advocate interdisciplinary approaches to understanding and addressing ecological crisis through cultural and literary perspectives. This paper examines how Amish Tripathi's Shiva Trilogy constructs ecological ethics through mythological retellings and investigates its relevance to contemporary environmental sustainability. Although the Shiva Trilogy has garnered significant attention for its mythological reinterpretations and philosophical dimensions, its ecological consciousness has received limited critical attention. The trilogy reinterprets Hindu mythology to construct an ecological ethic that critiques environmental exploitation while advocating sustainable coexistence between humanity and nature. Through the symbolism of the Saraswati River, the ethical dilemmas surrounding Somras, environmental justice, and Shiva's evolving understanding of dharma, Tripathi argues that human prosperity depends on maintaining harmony with the natural world. The analysis reveals that the trilogy re-examines Hindu mythology as a framework for ecological ethics by portraying environmental degradation as the consequence of moral imbalance, while advocating responsible stewardship of natural resources. The study will contribute to contemporary discussions in ecocriticism and environmental humanities by demonstrating how mythological fiction can foster ecological awareness and sustainability through culturally rooted narratives.

Keywords: Environmental Sustainability, Ecocriticism, Environmental Humanities, Ecological Ethics, Mythological Retellings

Introduction

The Earth is facing numerous ecological challenges in recent decades, including resource scarcity and climate change. The natural world is constantly being depleted due to the overuse and exploitation of its resources, triggered by the world's rapid and widespread industrial growth and materialistic outlook for dominance. The stark reality of the climate crisis is brought about by extreme global warming, melting polar ice caps, rising sea levels, forest fires, deforestation, food and water shortages, pandemics, and war, to name a few. This is where environmental sustainability comes in. Environmental sustainability involves the practice of reducing natural resource consumption, recycling materials, adopting renewable energy sources, waste reduction, proper waste management, using clean production methods, protecting wildlife, conserving natural habitats, and preventing species extinction, meeting human needs without compromising the health of the environment, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promote carbon sequestration, transitioning to renewable energy, enhancing energy efficiency, and supporting green technology. It is the responsibility of the people to conserve natural resources and global ecosystems to avoid their depletion and to support health and well-being. The only way to accomplish this Herculean task is to raise awareness of the devastating consequences of irresponsible use of the natural world.

Literature plays an intricate and essential role in understanding and promoting sustainable environments and interspecies ecologies through stories, poetry, essays, novels, and narratives from diverse cultural and natural heritage that support ecological awareness and sustainability. Literature can function as an ecological intervention by making readers aware of environmental issues through narrative, symbolism, and emotional engagement (Buell, 1995). Through its depiction of the natural world, exploration of environmental issues, and reflection on human-nature relationships, literature can engage readers in ecological concerns and encourage them to become more conscious of their impact on the planet.

Environmental humanities is an interdisciplinary field that examines the complex relationships between humans and the natural environment through the perspectives of the humanities, including literature, philosophy, history, cultural studies, ethics, religion, anthropology, and the arts. It seeks to understand how human beliefs, values, narratives, and cultural practices shape environmental attitudes and influence ecological crises and sustainability. Environmental humanities integrate humanistic inquiry with environmental concerns to address global ecological challenges by emphasising ethical responsibility, cultural diversity, and ecological justice (Rose et al. 2012, pp. 1-5). Unlike environmental science, which primarily studies ecological processes, environmental humanities investigate how human societies imagine, represent, and respond to nature. Environmental humanities broaden environmental inquiry by integrating literature, philosophy, ethics, history, religion, and cultural studies with ecological concerns. Within this framework, literature becomes more than artistic expression; it functions as a medium of environmental discourse that critiques ecological destruction, preserves cultural and ecological memory, and fosters sustainable values. Nayar starts the chapter on ecocriticism by saying, "We live in a world increasingly lost to pollution, contamination, and industry-sponsored bio-disaster. It is now a truism to say that mankind is efficiently committing ecocide, making the planet inhospitable for the life of any kind" (Nayar, 2010, P. 328-329). He further argues that

"Ecocriticism believes that literary, visual, and other representations of nature are very much to do with an age's views and treatment of nature. Further, it seeks links between literary studies and environmental activism, between human and social sciences and environmental discourse. It appropriates the rhetoric of environmentalism while looking at the effects such discourses have on the culture" (Nayar, 2010, P. 330).

Contemporary Indian writers have tapped into the rich vein of Hindu mythologies, taken a situation or a character, and interpreted them in new social, political, and cultural contexts to

create a retelling of the great Epics and Puranas again and again, but in different forms. Amish Tripathi's Shiva Trilogy illustrates how mythological retellings can promote ecological consciousness by reimagining traditional narratives in ways that resonate with present-day environmental challenges. Although the Shiva Trilogy has garnered significant attention for its mythological reinterpretations and philosophical dimensions, its ecological consciousness has received limited critical attention. The trilogy reinterprets Hindu mythology to construct an ecological ethic that critiques environmental exploitation while advocating sustainable coexistence between humanity and nature.

Research Objectives

The primary objective of the study is to examine the ecological ethics embedded in Amish Tripathi's Shiva Trilogy with particular emphasis on the moral responsibility between humanity and the natural environment. It seeks to explore how the trilogy advocates environmental responsibility, ecological harmony and ethical stewardship through Indian mythology. The study will further analyse the representations of nature, including rivers, mountains and landscapes, to understand how these elements contribute to environmental sustainability and the interconnectedness of all forms of life. Another important objective is to investigate the portrayal of environmental degradation in the trilogy by examining the ecological consequences of Somras, the depletion of the Saraswati River and human interventions in natural systems. Finally, the study aims to evaluate the contribution of Shiva Trilogy to environmental humanities by assessing how mythological fiction serves as a medium for ecological awareness, promoting sustainable thinking, and encouraging readers to reflect on the dimensions of environmental conservation.

Literature Review

This literature review surveys four interconnected forms of studies. First is the founding principles of environmental humanities; second is the emergence of sustainability as a literary concern; third is the theory of mythology and ecology within Indian thought; and fourth is the available literary criticism on Shiva Trilogy.

Environmental humanities developed from the notion that ecological problems can never be understood or resolved exclusively through scientific and technological knowledge. It gained prominence with the publication of The Ecocriticism Reader (1996) by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm. Ecocriticism remains one of the most important foundations of environmental humanities. Ecocriticism is defined as the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment and calls for an earth-centred mode of reading (Glotfelty and Fromm xviii). Lawrence Buell argues that environmentally oriented literature recognises the non-human environment not merely as a setting but as a presence that influences human history and ethical responsibility (Buell 22). In Ecocriticism, Greg Garrard studies the relationship between the human and the non-human (nature), as it is expressed in what he calls "large scale metaphors" through history. Each chapter explores one of these metaphors – such as wilderness, apocalypse, pastoral, dwelling, animals and earth – which are thought to have "certain political effects or serve specific social interests" (Garrard 8). Contemporary ecocriticism examines how a text represents the political, social, cultural, and material processes through which environments are exploited or protected. This critical framework can be used to examine the Shiva Trilogy, which not only comprises picturesque descriptions of Kailash, Kashmir, rivers and forests but also presents polluted water, depleted rivers, toxic waste, desertification, plague, deformity, and ecological conflict.

Sustainability emerged as a literary concern when scholars started debating how a narrative form shapes ecological risk and resource limits for people. Rob Nixon's idea of "slow violence" describes environmental damage that accumulates gradually and disproportionately affects the poor, violence that is easy for literature and media to overlook because it lacks a single dramatic event (Nixon 2). Ursula Heise extends

this concern to species loss, arguing that narratives of extinction rely on inherited cultural templates of elegy and tragedy that shape which species come to matter to the public and which do not (Heise 5). The intersection of mythology and ecological hought within Indian traditions creates an additional framework for analysing the text. khaṁ vāyum agniṁ salilaṁmahīṁ cayotīṁṣi sattvāni diśo drumādīnsarit-samudrāṁś ca hareḥ śarīraṁyat kiṁ ca bhūtaṁ praṇamed ananyaḥThis quote from Srimad Bhagavatam (11.2.41) literally tells us that ether, fire, air, water, earth, the sun and other luminaries, all living beings, the directions, trees and other plants, the rivers and oceans — whatever a devotee experiences should be considered to be an expansion of the Supreme Lord. Thus, seeing everything that exists within creation as the body of the Supreme Lord, the devotee should offer his sincere respects to the entire expansion of the Lord's body. Hinduism, being one of the world's oldest religions, has always believed that nature and various natural elements are sacred manifestations of the divine. Several facets of Hinduism align with the principles of environmental preservation. Rivers, mountains, trees and animals are often considered sacred and worshipped as divine expressions. This outlook has created a sense of reverence and concern for the environment. Hinduism believes in the concept of the interconnectedness of life, where all living beings are seen as part of a larger cosmic unity. Even Christopher Key Chapple and Mary Evelyn Tucker's edited volume Hinduism and Ecology (2000) opines how Hindu philosophical concepts, texts, and rituals attribute moral status to natural entities while analysing the difficulties of turning ancient worldviews into modern ecological action. These works establish that myth in the Indian context is not just a religious category but a mine of ecological reasoning that is reinterpreted by contemporary writers.

The union of myth and ecology is a facet which has attracted the attention of scholars towards The Shiva Trilogy. One of the defining features of Tripathi's work is its humanisation of divinity. Thogai examines how the Shiva Trilogy modernises Indian myths by humanising figures traditionally treated as divine, arguing that this humanisation allows contemporary readers to relate to mythological narrative on ethical rather than purely devotional terms (Thogai 380). S. Ranjani and S. Janaki (2022) have discussed how Tripathi has portrayed Shiva as a Tibetan tribal leader whose transformation into the Mahadev is grounded in ethical choices, human dilemmas, and socio-political challenges. Another trend exemplified in the Shiva Trilogy is the fusion of mythology with science. Scholars like Sangeeta Tripathi and Dr. Mudita Agnihotri (2021) explore the manufacturing process of Somras, its ill effects through the division of cells, making it contemporary and appealing to modern readers who want rationality in all aspects of their lives. Divydharshini, Baggio, and Saranyadev read the trilogy as an ecocritical text in which rivers, forests, and mountains function as active agents rather than passive scenery, and in which the Somras operates as a symbol of unchecked technological progress that critiques modern civilization's exploitative relationship with nature (Divydharshini et al.). Their reading positions the trilogy within a broader move to combine Western ecocritical theory with indigenous Indian ecological philosophy, treating Tripathi's myth-making as a vehicle for ecological awakening rather than mere entertainment. Justine's ecocritical reading of The Immortals of Meluha builds on this humanisation to argue that the novel's setting functions as a deliberately constructed "earthly" world in which environmental description carries moral weight, so that the flourishing or degradation of Meluha's landscape becomes inseparable from the moral standing of its rulers (Justine 159). SP Priyadarshini and L. Fredette (2024) examine Amish Tripathi's literary works through the lenses of postcolonial and mythopoeic studies. The text particularly focuses on how Tripathi's writing reimagines Indian identity within a postcolonial context.

Research Methodology

The research is qualitative and interpretative in nature, with a focus on ecocriticism. The theoretical framework of this study adopts an interdisciplinary framework integrating

environmental humanities, ecocriticism, sustainability theory, deep ecology, and Indian ecological philosophy. Together, these perspectives provide a comprehensive understanding of how the trilogy constructs environmental consciousness through mythological narratives.

Primary data for this study is collected through textual analysis of the Shiva Trilogy comprising The Immortals of Meluha (2010), The Secret of the Nagas (2012), and The Oath of the Vayuputras (2013), author biographies, author interviews, and podcasts. In contrast, the secondary data for this research is collected from academic articles, scholarly reviews, and other relevant sources in journals and books related to the thesis topic.

Ecological Ethics in the Shiva Trilogy (Main Analysis)

a. Symbolism of Nature in the Trilogy

Nature is often presented as a manifestation of the divine. Encounters with natural elements and nature lead the characters to deeper insights into their beliefs and their connection to the Supreme Almighty. The story of the Shiva Trilogy is set in 1900 BC. It starts with a picturesque description of the sunset at Mansarovar Lake at the foot of Mount Kailash, Tibet, the abode of the protagonist, Shiva:

Shiva gazed at the orange sky. The clouds hovering above Mansarover had just parted to reveal the setting sun. The brilliant giver of life was calling it a day once again. Shiva had just seen a few sunrises in his twenty-one years. But the sunset! On any other day, Shiva would have taken in the vista – the sun and the immense lake against the magnificent backdrop of the Himalayas stretching as far back as the eye could see" (Tripathi, Immortals 1).

In Hindu mythology, Mount Kailash is revered as a sacred mountain, deeply associated with divine energy and spiritual power. Its portrayal in the trilogy reflects the significance of nature and its connection to the divine. When Shiva and his tribal Gunas reach the outskirts of Srinagar in the valley of Kashmir after marching continuously for four weeks from their homeland, Tibet, they are completely mesmerised by the natural landscape of Kashmir:

The mighty Jhelum River, a roaring tigress in the mountain, slowed down to the beat of a languorous cow as she entered the valley. She caressed the heavenly land of Kashmir, meandering her way into the immense Dal Lake. Further down, she broke away from the lake, continuing her journey to the sea. The vast valley was covered by a lush green canvas of grass. On it was painted the masterpiece that was Kashmir. Rows upon rows of flowers arrayed all of God's colours, their brilliance broken only by the soaring Chinar trees, offering a majestic, yet warm Kashmir welcome. The melodious singing of the birds calmed the exhausted ears of Shiva's tribe, accustomed only to the rude howling of icy mountain winds (Tripathi, Immortals 10).

Hindu philosophy identifies the universe as comprising five fundamental elements: earth, water, fire, air, and ether (or space). These elements are believed to be the building blocks of the physical world, including the human body. The body is considered a microcosm reflecting the universe's macrocosm. This perspective encourages individuals to respect and care for their own bodies and the environment, recognising the divine presence in all aspects of creation. In the Shiva Trilogy, Shiva is engrossed in deep thought for an extended period about the immersion of Sati's ashes, as per tradition, in the river Saraswati:

Indians believe that the body is a temporary gift from Mother Earth. She lends it to a living being so that one's soul has an instrument with which to carry out its karma. Once the soul's karma is done, the body must be returned, in a pure form, so that the Mother may use it for another purpose. The ashes represent a human body that has been purified by the greatest purifier of them all: Lord Agni, the God of fire. By immersing the ashes into holy waters, the body is offered back, with respect to Mother Earth (Tripathi, Oath 554).

Throughout the trilogy, Shiva, the protagonist, consistently displays deep respect for life,

whether human or non-human. His respect extends to the environment, as he recognises the interconnectedness of all things, people, animals, ecosystems, and the broader natural world.

b. Saraswati River and Ecological Decline

In the Shiva Trilogy, the depletion of the river Saraswati is one of the central plot points. River Saraswati is depicted as the lifeline of the ancient Meluhan Civilisation, which provided not just fertile lands and sustenance to its inhabitants but also helped in the production of Somras, the elixir of life, granting the consumers a lifespan and strength, thereby making Meluha prosperous and powerful. It serves as one of the most powerful symbols of ecological sustainability and environmental decline, and Amish Tripathi cleverly uses the myth of River Saraswati in the trilogy, as it is regarded as one of the significant holy rivers, along with Ganga and Yamuna. These three rivers are often regarded as the consorts of Brahma, Shiva, and Vishnu, the Hindu Trinity. According to Hindu mythology, the Ganges (Ganga), Yamuna, and the fabled Saraswati River converge at Triveni Sangam. On this holy site, bathing is believed to absolve adherents of their sins and serves as a means to practice prāyaścitta, or atonement for past transgressions, thereby breaking free from the cycle of rebirth.

Although the Saraswati is treated as a sacred river in the Meluhan civilisation, this does not prevent its large-scale exploitation. Brahaspati, a Meluhan scientist, enlightened Shiva about the manufacturing procedure for Somras, which is highly expressive, suggesting that the river is used for the production of Somras without regard for other societies or other life forms on a massive scale. Meluhan scientist Brahaspati's enlightening Shiva about the process of Somras manufacturing is quite implicative. "We have giant churning machines in a massive cavern at the base of this mountain. The Saraswati waters are led in here…the water is collected in an enormous pool…we affectionately call Sagar" (Tripathi, Oath 138). Amish Tripathi shows us how the river is sucked out for the production of the Somras without concern for other societies as well as other life forms. Brahaspati, the scientist, reveals to Shiva that "[t]he Saraswati has already stopped reaching the Western Sea. It now ends its journey in an inland delta, south of Rajasthan. The desertification of the land to the south of this delta is already complete. It's a matter of time before the entire river is completely destroyed. Can you imagine the impact on Meluha? On India" (Tripathi, Oath 17-18)?

Another reason for the depletion of Saraswati is the upkeep of a hygienic environment in the Meluhan kingdom after the consumption of Somras as "sweat and urine released from the body even after a person has drunk the Somras for years remain toxic. So you have to eject it from the body and make sure it does not affect anyone else (Tripathi, Immortals 137). That's why the Meluhans are obsessed with hygiene.

Water is the cleanest absorber of the effluents that the Somras generates and excretes as toxins. Meluhans are taught to drink gallons of water. And everything that can be washed, should be washed! The Meluhans bathe at least twice a day. All ablutions are done in specific rooms and underground drains then safely carry the waste out of the city (Tripathi, Immortals 137-138).

The depletion of the Saraswati is symbolic of the environmental destruction caused by human greed and the overuse of natural resources. The once-mighty and sacred river begins to dry up, affecting the natural ecosystem and the people and civilisations that depend on it for sustenance. The drying of the Saraswati is a metaphor for the decline of the Meluhan civilisation. As the river dries up, it symbolises the slow disentanglement of the once-prosperous empire, whose survival has been built on the misuse of Somras and the consequences of exploiting nature for personal gain. It reflects real-world concerns about the sustainability of natural resources.

The Saraswati River narrative represents all the rivers across the clime and place in this Anthropocene epoch. Water, the elixir of life, is completely commodified and is no longer a universal resource to be even-handedly used. This phenomenon in the trilogy echoes the conflicts over rivers/water being waged in the

contemporary world. Vandana Shiva, a renowned environmentalist and activist, in her book Water Wars (2002) urges us to rethink our relationship with water. She investigates the present-day threats posed by the commodification of water globally and asks us to shift our attitude toward water and recognise it as a shared inheritance and sacred trust.

c. Somras: Science, Progress and Environmental Ethics

Somras has a crucial role in the Shiva Trilogy's storyline, affecting life, society, and the fate of the Meluhan Civilisation. It is manufactured by mixing a rare herb, Sanjeevani, with water from the River Saraswati. It is depicted as a divine elixir that extends life and maintains youth. It grants the people of Meluha near-immortality, allowing them to remain young and healthy for centuries. Somras also has healing abilities. It can cure diseases, regenerate cells, and enhance the body's natural healing processes, making it a tool for maintaining a healthy and stable population. The creation and use of Somras is a testament to the scientific and technological achievements of the Meluhan Civilisation. It demonstrates their advanced understanding of chemistry and biology, elevating their society above others in the Shiva Trilogy. However, just as every coin has two sides, Somras also has its evil effects. The evil effects of Somras are detailed by Brahaspati, the Chief Meluhan scientist, to Shiva, Sati, and others in The Oath of the Vayuputras.

Firstly, the excessive use of the Saraswati River's water to produce Somras at Mount Mandar leads to the gradual depletion of the river's water resources. As the chief Meluhan scientist, Brihaspati attempted to manufacture the legendary Somras using water from other sources, but the experiment failed. Brihaspati notes that the Saraswati River no longer reaches the sea, ending its journey in an inland delta.

Secondly, Somras is creating Nagas, people with mutations. These mutations manifest in various ways, including additional limbs, abnormal skin, elongated body parts, and other physical abnormalities. The people of Meluha and Swadweep fear and shun the Nagas because of their deformities, associating them with evil and bad omens. As a result, the Nagas are forced to live in isolation, forming their hidden society away from the rest of the population. Kali, the sister of Sati (Shiva's wife), is a Naga with multiple arms, while Ganesh, Sati's son, is also a Naga and is born with a facial deformity that gives him the appearance of an elephant. The prolonged use of Somras can have a random effect on a few babies in the womb, particularly if the parents have been consuming Somras for an extended period. This can result in rapid cell multiplication in babies, leading to deformation and abnormal growth. The mutations of the Nagas serve as a metaphor for the unintended consequences of technological or scientific advancements. While Somras is a boon to those who use it, its darker side, represented by the mutations, shows that unchecked use of powerful substances can have destructive side effects. The social stigma attached to the Nagas reflects how society deals with those who are different or perceived as outcasts. Although physically distinct, the Nagas are not inherently evil, and characters like Kali and Ganesh are portrayed as wise and courageous.

Thirdly, Somras is responsible for the plague of Branga, a mysterious and deadly disease that devastates its people. The people of Branga are particularly affected because the toxic waste from Somras' production flows into the River Tsangpo (popularly known as the Brahmaputra) through their region, polluting the water and causing the plague. Though the symptoms of the disease are not elaborately detailed in the books, it is portrayed as highly dangerous, killing a large number of people in the region. The people of Branga are desperate to find a cure, as it continuously decimates their population, making it a significant crisis for them, but without any success. The people of Branga depend on the mysterious Naga tribe for medicine that temporarily cures the plague. The medicine is a rare, secret remedy provided by the Naga kingdom in exchange for loyalty and goods. The cure, however, is not permanent, and the Brangas need a continuous supply of medicine to prevent the plague from resurfacing. As a result, the

Brangas are somewhat subjugated and forced to rely on the Nagas to survive the disease. The plague in Branga is not just a regional problem but a reflection of the unsustainable and unethical use of Somras.

In the Meluhan Civilisation, Somras starts as a symbol of progress and power but gradually reveals itself to be a curse that causes environmental damage, societal inequality, and moral degradation. This duality highlights the series' broader theme: the fine line between good and evil and the consequences of unsustainable progress. The revelations about Somras serve as a metaphor for the unintended consequences of a miraculous substance, illustrating how unbridled scientific or technological progress can lead to social injustice and ecological catastrophes. The Branga plague also deepens the moral dilemmas faced by Shiva, the protagonist of the Shiva Trilogy, who must grapple with the realisation that the very substance that grants immortality to one civilisation is causing suffering and death in others. This tension between benefit and harm is central to the trilogy's ethical theme. As Shiva uncovers the truth behind the Nagas' mutations, he realises that the continued use of Somras is unsustainable and harmful. By championing the rights of the Nagas and exposing the link between their suffering and the environmental degradation caused by Somras, Shiva highlights the importance of social equity in sustainability. The mutations, environmental degradation, and the Branga plague (also a consequence of Somras) signify that the elixir has become a curse rather than a blessing. This depletion forces Shiva and others to confront the ethical implications of using Somras. Sustainable practices must benefit all members of society, particularly those most affected by environmental harm. It represents the broader theme of unsustainable progress and the exploitation of natural resources for short-term gains.

d. War, Violence and Environmental Destruction

A major theme throughout the trilogy is war. The conflict between the Suryavanshis and the Chandravanshis illustrates how political ideologies and cultural differences can perpetuate violence. Armies, strategic alliances, and battles dominate the storyline, highlighting how rulers justify warfare in the name of protecting civilisation. However, the trilogy also questions the morality of war by showing its consequences on ordinary people and the environment. It is, in fact, due to the prolonged invasion of the Nagas that Shiva and his tribe are summoned from Kailash.

An intriguing aspect of the trilogy is its portrayal of war and violence as anything but heroic. The protagonist, Shiva, initially believes that war is essential to defeat evil. But over a period of time comes to understand that violence perpetuates cycles of suffering. This moral conflict highlights the danger of labelling someone as "evil," as perspectives can vary greatly. What one civilisation views as ethical may be perceived differently by another.

e. Sustainable Development for the Greater Good

The ecological imbalance created by the Meluhan system fuels resentment and conflict between civilisations. As Shiva discovers the truth, he realises that what one society calls progress may create destruction for another. The consequences of decisions that impact the environment are not felt immediately; therefore, a key element of environmental sustainability is its progressive nature. The need for environmental sustainability is linked not only to the present generation but also to future generations. In the trilogy, three key decisions are made not only to mitigate damage to people and the environment but also to conserve resources for future generations, for the greater good. First, it is decided to destroy Mount Mandar, where Somras' manufacturing units are located, as it is the catalyst for most of the problems. The decision to terminate the Somras manufacturing units is not just about stopping the immediate harm but also recognising the broader implications of unregulated technological advancement. This stance promotes the idea that progress must be balanced with environmental responsibility and ethical considerations, mirroring the modern sustainability principle that

technology should not harm the environment or future generations. After that, the Somras trash disposal site, established on the Tsangpo River in Tibet, is excavated and cleared of its contents. The garbage is transported farther north to an isolated and desolate area of the Tibetan Plateau, where it is entombed deep underground in sludgy cases composed of bilva leaves and damp clay, which are further wrapped in boxes of thick lead. Further, in the interest of India, it was decided that the river Yamuna's path would be changed to merge it with the Ganga at Prayag, as the river Saraswati emerged from the confluence of the Sutlej and the Yamuna, and without the river Saraswati, it would be impossible to manufacture Somras. Subsequently, after the change in Yamuna's progression, the poisonous waters in Branga are free from the Somras poison due to the burst of clean water from the mighty river. This decision to protect the river reflects an understanding of the need to preserve vital natural resources and restore ecological balance. This move aligns with sustainable practices that ensure the responsible management of water resources. Shiva's respect for nature drives many of his decisions, such as the protection of the Saraswati and the rejection of technologies that harm the environment. This perspective is rooted in the principle that human well-being is closely tied to the health of the environment, an idea central to the concept of sustainability. The Shiva Trilogy explores themes of balance between good and evil, and this extends to the relationship between humans and the natural world.

f. Environmental Justice

Environmental justice refers to the equitable distribution of environmental benefits and burdens among all people irrespective of their political, social and economic status. It emphasises the fact that the adverse effects of environmental degradation or hazardous development should not affect any community disproportionately. Rob Nixon's concept of slow violence gave this concern its most influential literary vocabulary, describing environmental damage that accumulates gradually, over years or generations, and is therefore easy for both media and literature to overlook because it produces no single dramatic event (Nixon 2). One of the most significant illustrations of environmental justice in the trilogy is the production of Somras, a divine elixir that grants longevity and good health. Divydharshini, Baggio, and Saranyadev read this pattern explicitly through Nixon's framework, arguing that the ecological degradation caused by the Somras constitutes a form of slow violence precisely because it is hidden, delayed, and systemic, allowing the Meluhans who benefit from the elixir to overlook the cumulative cost borne by others (Divydharshini et al.). While the benefits are enjoyed by the civilisation of Meluha, the other marginalised communities like the Nagas bear the brunt of pollution and mutation, thereby making Somras a metaphor for environmentally destructive scientific advancement (Bala and Dwivedi, 4-5).

This unequal distribution of environmental harm is compounded by the trilogy's caste system, which reinterprets bodily and ecological affliction as moral failing rather than structural consequence. M. S. Varsha's analysis of caste hierarchy in the trilogy shows that Meluhan society sorts individuals with physical deformities into the Vikarma class, whose condition is understood not as an environmental injury but as punishment for sins committed in a previous life, a belief that denies them basic social rights including marriage and public participation (Varsha 331). The Nagas, many of whom bear the physical marks of Somras-related contamination, are treated according to this same logic: rather than being recognized as victims of an environmental process from which they were excluded, they are cast as inherently evil and confined to the geographic margins of the Sapt Sindhu (Varsha 331).

Findings

a. Nature Is Represented as an Active, Morally Significant Agent

The analysis confirms that the trilogy consistently departs from a view of landscape as a passive setting. Rivers, forests, and mountains recur as forces that shape human choice and carry ethical weight. Singh and Singh similarly observe that the

Saraswati River and the Himalayas function as sites where spiritual and ecological significance converge, reinforcing what Christopher Key Chapple and Mary Evelyn Tucker describe as a broader Hindu tradition of treating natural features as morally active rather than inert (Singh and Singh f649; Chapple and Tucker xxxiii). This finding indicates that the trilogy's model of sustainability is grounded less in resource management than in a relational ethic between human and nonhuman actors.

b. **Somras Functions as a Sustained Critique of Unsustainable Development**

The single most consistent environmental motif identified across the corpus is the Somras, whose production the trilogy repeatedly links to river depletion and ecological damage. This finding aligns with Shukla and Patel's argument that the Somras operates as a harbinger of environmental crisis, and with Bala and Dwivedi's description of its production process as ecocidal in scope (Shukla and Patel b613; Bala and Dwivedi 4).

c. **Ecological Harm Is Distributed Unevenly and Displaced onto Marginalised Groups**

The Naga community bears the most visible physical consequences of Somras production, in the form of birth deformities, while the Meluhan elite who benefit from the elixir remain comparatively insulated from its costs. This distribution matches Rob Nixon's account of slow violence as environmental damage that accumulates gradually and disproportionately among populations with the least power to resist it (Nixon 2), and it is compounded by the caste logic documented by Varsha, whereby the Vikarma and the Nagas are blamed for their own affliction rather than recognized as its casualties (Varsha 331). This finding suggests that the trilogy's environmental narrative cannot be separated from its social narrative: sustainability, in this text, is inseparable from questions of who is made to pay for unsustainable practices.

d. **Myth Functions as a Vehicle for Environmental Consciousness**

By humanising Shiva and grounding his story in a materially detailed, ecologically damaged world, Tripathi allows readers to encounter environmental crisis through a familiar mythic register rather than through didactic argument, a strategy consistent with Thogai's account of the trilogy's modernisation of myth for ethical rather than purely devotional engagement (Thogai 380). This finding is further supported by Mircea Eliade's account of myth as a mode through which a culture narrates its relationship to cosmological order, which helps explain why ecological balance in the trilogy is so often figured as a sacred obligation rather than a technical one (Eliade 6).

e. **War Extends the Trilogy's Environmental Critique Beyond the Somras**

Finally, the analysis finds that the trilogy's environmental critique is not limited to the Somras but extends to warfare, particularly the deployment of the daivi astra, whose destructive power permanently scars the landscape. Singh and Singh identify this as evidence that unbridled ideological and technological ambition, whether expressed through chemistry or through weaponry, consistently exacts an ecological cost within the narrative (Singh and Singh f650). This finding indicates that the trilogy's model of unsustainability is general rather than narrowly tied to a single plot device, positioning ecological harm as the predictable outcome of any form of unchecked human ambition.

Conclusion

Franklin D. Roosevelt once said, "A nation that destroys its soils destroys itself." River Saraswati was not only the cradle but also the lifeline of the Meluhan Civilisation. By destroying it, the Meluhans actually destroyed themselves. In the society of Meluha, the importance of conserving and preserving the environment takes a backseat while the main focus is on the mass consumption of the Somras, a divine elixir that bestows extraordinary powers upon its consumers, making them almost God-like. But the consequence is perilous. The Meluhan civilisation was wiped out as it failed to make efforts to integrate environmental ethics into practices that are crucial in fostering a more sustainable and ecologically responsible society. Through the Shiva Trilogy, Amish Tripathi has emphasised environmental sustainability as it can help ensure that future generations have access to clean air,

water, and a stable climate. However, there are many factors which determine environmental sustainability, as it involves scientific research, policy-making, technological innovations, and collective social action. It requires a multidisciplinary approach that encompasses various perspectives and approaches. The research also contributes to the field of Environmental Humanities by demonstrating how literature and mythology can cultivate ecological awareness and encourage sustainable thinking. Through the Shiva Trilogy, Amish Tripathi not only contributes to contemporary mythological fiction by addressing global ecological challenges but also advocates the concept of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam," meaning "the world is one family," highlighting the idea that humans are part of a larger ecosystem and share a collective responsibility to protect and care for nature not just for a particular society but for all life forms.

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