INTRODUCTION:-

Amish Tripathi was born in 1974 in Mumbai and grew up in a middle class family. His father was an engineer and worked in the well known construction company, L&T and has a passion for music also. Amish’s family is a religious family from Benares. Benares is a holy city and has a long religious background, people here worship lord Shiva. Amish is also an ardent devotee of Shiva. His grand-father was a Sanskrit scholar and a pandit in Benares. He says that he has learnt most of his Hindu theology and religion from his grand-father and his very religious parents. His family background gave him the material for writing his books while his education and work experience helped him in marketing his book. He lives in Mumbai with his wife and son Neel.

Thirty eight year old ,the former national head, marketing and product manager, IDBI Fortis Life Insurance (now IDBI, Federal Life Insurance) now a million dollar writer. During his childhood he has no inclination towards becoming a writer. He was an intelligent student and opted for science in his graduation and then went to do his MBA from IIM Kolkata. During his job he used to travel in car to office for two three hours he thought of utilizing his time and started writing. It was not an easy job to start with, first he wrote character sketches, and then prepared summaries of each chapter. getting frustrated he stopped writing ,later on his wife boasted him up and finally he come up with his novels , THE SHIVA TRILOGY.

Chennai –based publisher Westland Ltd, has written that the trilogy has become the fastest selling book series in the history of Indian publishing industry, with 1.5 million copies in print and over Rs.40 crore in sales. Forbes India magazine estimated Amish’s earnings at Rs. 10 crore.

Amish is well read in Hindu scriptures is clearly noted during his discussion with the audience, where during his visit at the Jaipur literature festival he quotes from the Hindu scripture Rig Veda,

“Truth is one but wise men know it as many; God is one but we can approach him in many ways. He says that he lives this philosophy ; in his pooja room at home besides idols of lord Shiva and other Hindu gods , he
also regularly worships pictures of the Muslim Kabba, Mother Mary, Gautam Buddha, besides symbols of many other religions”.

ABOUT THE NOVELS.

My field of work is on three novels by Amish Tripathi these are:

1. *The Immortals of Meluha*.
2. *The Secret of the Nagas*.
3. *The Oath of the Vayuputras*.

The Shiva’s Trilogy consists of the above mentioned three novels by Amish Tripathi. The first novel introduces the readers to all the main characters, about Somras, planning of many cities, the architecture of temples, history and about the ancient culture. The second novel talks on large about good and evil, Shiva comes to know what the Evil is. The third novel contains some philosophical concepts from the *Gita* and the *Upanishads* like Karma and rebirth.

The first part begins at Mansarovar in 1900B.C where Shiva, the chief of Gunas tribe lives and is in a continuous fight with the Prakartis another tribe. Nandi, a captain of Meluha Empire comes to invite him to the empire Suryavanshis that was created by Lord Ram is a very peaceful kingdom but now they are under trouble by the Chandravanshis with combined forces of Nagas. Shiva agrees to go with them. Thus the journey for the good of the nation starts. The first place to reach was Srinagar, there they were warmly welcomed by the people, they were provided with well furnished rooms to stay in. Next morning when Shiva wakes up he comes to know that all his people are suffering from high fever, under Ayurvati’s (the chief of medicine) guidance they were treated and given Somras to drink. Shiva also drinks it and his throat turns blue. On seeing this Meluhans were excited and declares Shiva as the NEELKANTH, their fabled savior.
Next journey is to Devagiri, capital of Kashmir and Meluha capital. Shiva meets king Daksha. At Meru Shiva visits Brahma temple, here for the first time he sees the beautiful lady Sati. She is the daughter of Daksha. Sati is a Vikarma, an untouchable in this life due to sins in her previous birth. Shiva is totally opposed to the concept of Vikarma. Both starts loving each other and decides to get married, Daksha is so happy to hear this and finally in a grand seven days ceremony they get married, on the same day Veerabhadra and Krittika also gets married.

Shiva stayed in Devagiri for few days and here he comes to know about many things like symbol AUM devised by lord Bharat, he learns about Somars. Brahaspati takes his family to mount Mandar and tells in detail about the process of making of potion, he tells all about Nagas. In the middle of their journey Naga attacks the caravan Shiva concludes that the attack on Sati was not to kill but kidnap her. Again during the battle of Punj Sati is attacked by Naga and is seriously injured by the Agnibaan. This makes Shiva angrier towards Nagas. Later Nagas totally devastated the mount Mandar killing many inventors, even the chief scientist is missing. When Shiva and his troop reach there they were shocked, in ruins Shiva finds a Naga’s bracelet, a symbol of aum, making sure that the Nagas are involved in this attack. Shiva takes vow to destroy the Naga.

Shiva was so enraged by this attack that he declares war on the Chandravanshis. On the declaration of war Suryavanshi’s army starts their war preparation. They planned to attack in a bow shape with tortoise formation in the middle and a hidden archery at the back. Shiva will lead the army along with general Parvateshwar, Vakra, Nandi and Veerbhadra. Chandravanshi’s on the other hand plan to attack in parallel lines of fifty squads each having five thousand soldiers to move from back to side under the leadership of Dilipa. In this Dharmayudh, the holy war, Suryavanshis win and Dilipa surrenders with his son Bhagirath and comes to Daksha. Here Daksha declares Parvateshwar as viceroy of Swadeep, the Chandravanshis kingdom.

In concluding last two chapters Shiva and his troop reaches Ayodhya. On the main gate a motto was written ‘shringar, sundarya, swatantra’.

There is a hot discussion between Anandmayi and Parvataeshwar on Chandravanshis, Suryavanshis and on lord Ram. Shiva here visited Ramjanmabhomi temple, he meets a priest who preaches him about the karma, bhagya and his choices in life which will guide him in
future. He challenges Shiva to find, ‘what is evil?’ The book ends with an attack by a Naga on Sati and Shiva saving her.

The second book begins with a fight between Shiva and Sati with Naga. Sati is saved and Naga escapes throwing behind him a gold coin bag. Later on it is discovered that these are Branga coins which belong to king Chandraketu as half moon (Chandra) is engraved on it. Shiva passes an official order declaring Daksha as an emperor of India and Dilipa as an emperor of Swadeep.

Shiva and Sati travel to Magadh. Shiva visits Narsimha temple and meets Vasudeva. Further they reach Kashi, along with general Parvateshwar, Nandi, Veerbhada, Ayurvati, Bhagirath and Anandmay.

In Kashi, Kartik is born. Shiva and his men leave for Branga in search of Somras. On reaching there, Uma sops them from entering the main gate but on knowing about Neelkanth she was delighted and allows them to enter. Shiva is surprised to see the technology used by Brangas in making ships, gates, barriers etc. Devodas tells Shiva that the only person who knows about the medicine is the bandit whose name is Parashuram he lives in the jungle and kills anyone who comes near him. In the battle of Madhumati between Shiva’s men and Parashuram, Parashuram lost. Drapaku is seriously injured and died. Later Shiva is surprised to know that Parashuram is Vasudev and Parashuram is surprised to know that Shiva is Neelkanth. Parashuram gives him the recipe of medicine to the people of Bhranga and leaves for Kashi with Shiva. They both discusses on evil and also about Nagas.

In Icchawar Sati is attacked by three prides of lion and is saved by the Naga and the queen, then she comes to that the queen is Kali, her twin sister and Nagas is Ganesh, her son. Kali tells her all about themselves that how she was denounced by their father because she was born with deformities, Ganesh whom Sati believes to be dead was also born with deformities, so he was also denounced. Sati brings them both to Kashi, Athithigiva accepts them although they are Nagas. Shiva when returns comes to know about Kali and Ganesh he also accepts them, but when he sees Ganesh he recognizes him as a Naga who had killed Brahaspati because of the broken locket of Ganesh is with him. In his anger he leaves Sati and went to the palace of Branga with Kartik. One day Ganesh is sitting in the Sankatmochan temple and Kartik is playing with Krittika in the nearby park when suddenly three lions attacked them. Ganesh protects them
and is severely injured and was unconscious for sixty days. Veerbhada tells Shiva that it was Ganesh who protected his son twice, he arranged for Nagas medicine which saved Kartik during his birth, and saved Sati at Icchawar. He asks Shiva o forgive him and Shiva forgives him.

The book ends with the Daksha coming to Kashi with Sati, so annoyed with her father for not telling her the truth she attacks him and asks him to leave the place. Daksha goes back to Meluha.

Shiva decides to travel to kashi with kali who knows all the paths through Dandak forest to the Naga capital, while travelling they are attacked by envoy of ships containing Daivi Astra the weapons of mass destruction, once banned by lord Rudra. Shiva and kali escapes safely, on reaching Panchvati kali takes Shiva to a nearby school where she believes the secrets of the Nagas lies. The book ends with a great surprise for Shiva when he enters a class he finds Brahaspati teaching in a classroom.

The last novel of the series, ‘The Oath of The Vayuputra’s’ completes the mythical story. Brahaspati tells Shiva about the ill effects of Somras. It is due to the manufacturing of Somras that the Saraswati river’s water is depleting, the waste which is dumped in the Tsango river results in the disaster plaque and also in the birth of deformed Naga babies. In the city of Ujjain Shiva meets chief of Vasudeva pandit, Gopal. Gopal tells him about his ancient tribe of lord Rudra. Shiva here concludes that his uncle Manobhu trained him from the child hood to become a Neelkanth. In this book Shiva declares a holy war and asks the people to stop the use of Somras. Shiva divides his army into two under his and Sati’s leadership. In the battle of Devagiri between Sati and Meluhans, Sati is defeated and badly injured. Here in the battle of Mrittikavati Shiva wins.

Daksha makes a plan to kill Shiva through some Egyptians warriors. He frames a peace treaty for Shiva but in his absence Sati went to attend the peace conference where she was attacked. She fights bravely but is killed. The war ends with the death of Sati. Shiva in his anger unleashes the Pashupati astra and ends Devagiris history. The Somras manufacturing units which are hidden beneath the city are destroyed.

In the epilogue Shiva returns to mount Kailash and spends his remaining days peacefully. Ganesh and Kartik are now worshiped as gods all over India. They attacked and finished the
whole clan of Egyptians attackers. Sati is reckoned as goddess Shakti and her ashes are spread throughout India, in places later known as Shaktipeethas.

The main characters in the novels:

Shiva– He is the protagonist of the novel. He is the chief of the tribe and is a Tibetan immigrant to Meluha on consuming Somras when his throat turns blue thus he becomes the Neelkanth of the Meluhhan legend. When Shiva comes to know about the evil he starts searching for the source of evil, and when comes to know that it is Somras which will destroy India he declares war to destroy it completely. His works and achievements in saving India from its danger makes him the Mahadeva.

Sati- she is main female figure of the novel. She is the daughter of king Daksha, and wife of Shiva. She is beautiful and bold, a skilled warrior and later renowned as Goddess.

Daksha – He is the king of the Meluhans. He wants to be the emperor of whole India.His relation with Shiva is not good because he brings into light his injustices against his daughter, sati.

Brihaspati- He is a good friend of Shiva. He is the chief scientist of Meluha. He tells Shiva all about the process of manufacturing of Somras.

Ganesh – He is the first child of sati. He was born with deformities so was denounced by Daksha, and becomes Naga. He is a perfect warrior, and later becomes to be renowned as a God.

Kartik- he is the son of Shiv a and sati, skilled warrior and devoted son. He later moves to south india and is renowned as a god there.

Kali – she is sati’s twin sister, she was born with deformities and was denounced by Daksha. She was ostracized from society and declared a Naga. She helps Shiva in his journey to destroy evil. She is later renowned as a goddess.

Parvateshwar- he is the head of Meluhan army and is an ardant follower of Shiva. When Shiva decides to destroy Meluha for ending the usage of Somras Parvateshwar decides to help the country by fighting against Shiva.
Ayurvati- she is the chief of medicine, and intelligent and respected woman she is capable of curing any diseases.

Bhrigu- he is a renowned sage of India. He used deviya astra against Shiva because he believes that Somras is never evil. He is powerful and respected by everyone. In the end of the novel, he realizes the error of his ways after sati is killed.

Gopal - the chief of the vasudevas, gopal assists Shiva from beginning till the end. He also teaches Shiva about many philosophies of life.

There are many other minor characters like Nandi, Veerini, Anandmayi etc. in the novel.

In the novel some important races mentioned are:

Suryavanshis- the followers of lord ram and the solar calendar.

Chandravanshis-are the followers of lunar calendar.

Nagas - a cursed race of people who have physical deformities, and are skilled warriors.

Vasudevas- are secretive group of priests who help the Neelkanth in destroying evil.

Vayuputras- are a secret group of followers left by lord Rudra, they are responsible for the creation of the Neelkanth.

Some of the important kingdom mentioned in the novel:

Meluha - the empire of Suryavanshis. It includes the modern provinces of Kashmir, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Punjab, Gujrat, and the whole of Pakistan.

Swadeep - the empire of Chandravanshis. It comprises of modern Indian provinces of Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Sikkim, Assam, Meghalaya, Bangladesh, parts of Nepal and Bhutan.

Brangahhidray -the land of Brangas.

Pariah- in the far west, is the home of the Vayuputras and a birth place of Lord Rudra.
MYTH AND ITS USE IN THE NOVELS.

Amish believes that, ‘Myths are nothing but jumbled memories of a true past. A past buried under mounds of earth and ignorance’.

According to Oxford Dictionary,

“‘Myth is a traditional story, especially one concerning the early history of the history of the people or the explaining a natural or social phenomenon and typically involving supernatural being or phenomenon.’”

The gifted novelists have discovered source materials from myths and have employed them creatively. Realism is not a new concept for novels but using myths has added to a new taste.
Amish’s use of myth forms the main theme of his novels, these cannot be ignored. In a way these myths are the integral part of the novels. In a myth some of the main characters are Gods, some characters are super humans. In Shiva’s Trilogy lord Ram is God, although he is not an active character, but many times his presence and power is reminded to the reader in the very beginning of the novel it is told by Nandi that the Chandravanshis Empire was built by Lord Ram. At many places there is discussion on the rules laid by Lord Ram, and also the way people are following them ardently for example, during the discussion between Daksha and Shiva on Somras Daksha is telling Shiva, that Somras was invented by Lord Brahma and was given to everyone but to a particular group known as Saptarishis or the Brahmins. But now it is given to all four castes according to the rules made by Lord Ram,

“Yes, my lord. And the revolution was known as Lord Ram.

The greatest emperor that ever lived. Jai Shri Ram. His ideas

And leadership transformed the society of the Meluhans.”

Shiva, in the novel is a common man whom legend turns into God. He is idealized to such an extent that he seems to be much above the humanity in general he is a simple man whose Karma recast him as Neelkanth, the Mahadeva the god of gods. When Ayurvati notices Shivas throat turning blue, tears broke through her eyes. She kept repeating,

‘Om Brahmaye namah, Om Brahmaye namah’.

‘My lord you have come! The Neelkanth has come!’

The concept of tribes is myth. These characters also play an important role in the novel. These are presented as evil characters but are later discovered to be good. Kali, Sati’s sister and Ganesh, Sati and Shiva son are also Nagas. These are the deformed and horrible creatures.

‘The Naga woman was actually two women in one body. The body was one from the chest down. But there are two sets of shoulders fused to each other at that chest, each with a single arm dangling in either direction. The Naga has two heads. One body, two arms, four shoulders and twin heads. Lord Ram, what evil is this?’

The novel is full of mythical characters like Sati, Daksha, Parashuram, Brahaspati, Ganesh, Kartik, etc.
The author sometimes uses the mythical and puranic element with a purpose to teach their readers some moral or so. Many writers had taken such approach in their works. Whenever there is chaos or tension in the society public awareness is created through using some mythical stories in solving the problems, and when mythical aspect of God is used it automatically works on the minds of the people. In the Shiva’s Trilogy the main thing discussed is about Somras which is an evil. In making of Somras lots of water of Saraswati river is used and wasted. Shiva is fighting to save this river. May be the writer, through his novel, wants to make people aware of preserving some rivers, which are going to extinct.

There is use of some mythical stories in the novels. Like the story of the Parashuram that how and why he killed his mother.

MODERNITY IN THE NOVEL.

The other concept which I will work on is to find out in this novel is modernity. ‘Modernity’ is a word first used by Blaudelaire in the mid nineteenth century. In his essay ‘The Painter of Modern Life’, he describes modernity as the fashionable, fleeting, and contingent in art, opposition to the eternal and immutable. Modernity is the condition of modern man’s life that is alienation and fragmentation or the state of quality of being modern which is different from traditional styles. Several aspects, things and styles in modern form are used in the novel.

The war between good and evil is a modern Mahabharata said by Amish in his novel. In the third book ‘The Oath of the Vayuputras’ there is modern design bedrooms,

“Shiva and Gopal were led into a lavish suite of rooms with two separate bed chambers. The suite had been furnished with every luxury imaginable…bolsters and cushions of various sizes were strewn on the carpets at several corners, making comfortable floor-sitting areas. Lavish gold and silver plated accoutrements decorated the mantelpiece and shelves on the wall”.
At one place Shiva is served with idli in the breakfast which is a modern food. Modern war formations are used during the wars.

The Modernity in the myth in the novels will be discussed in detail in my research work.

THE USE OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE NOVEL.

According to the advanced Learners Dictionary ‘ philosophy is the study of the principles underlying the action and behavior of men’.

I will try to work is how Amish has taken philosophies from Gita and Upanishads and used them in his work. In ‘The Secret of the Nagas’, chapter nine is all about the Karma. In the eighteenth chapter of Gita there is a doctrine of Karma which says that fruit of once deeds, good and bad, are to be enjoyed not only in this life but also in future lives. It has been said that it perpetuates the caste system and also gives rise to the assumption that a leper is to be looked down upon his fellow being since he deserves at punishment because of his past deeds. This concept is mentioned by Amish in his novel ‘The immortals of Meluha’ where Shiva and Nandi are talking on Vikarma people.

Shiva asks, ‘who are Vikarma women?’

Nandi replied, ‘Vikarma are people in this birth who have been punished in this birth for the sins of their previous birth. Hence they have to live this life out with dignity and tolerate their present sufferings with grace. this the only way they can vibe their Karmas clean of the sins of their previous births. Vikarma men have their own order of penance and women have their own order’

At other place Bhrigu talks about Maya,

‘Everything in the world is Maya, an illusion. The ultimate truth one has to realize is that we actually need nothing. Because to possess an illusion is as good as possessing nothing.’
'Dharmo rakshati rakshitaha' is a concept from the *Gita* meaning, dharma protects those who protects it.’ This philosophical concept is strongly said by Kankhala when she comes to know about the conspiracy to kill Shiva by Bhrigu, so instead of going on war she commits suicide to save her from doing some Adharma.

Concept of Duality is also discussed in the novels. The Devas and the Asuras just like the Chandravanshis and the Suryavanshis, represent two balancing life forces- a duality.

‘duality, that is one of many perspectives of the universe-the masculine and the feminine. The Asursa and the Suryavanshis represent the masculine. The Devas and the Chandravanshis speak for the feminine.’

**SOME HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL ELEMENTS.**

‘*The Shiva Trilogy*’ has historical background, the base is Meluhan Civilization, having historical places with some historical characters as king Chenardhawj, Chandraketu although, the main characters are mythical.

Amish’s genius lies in the fact that he mingled the fragments of historical and religious elements and produced a forceful story. He links the past and the present, the archetypal and the real. Issues of the present world find their parallel in the myth of the past giving new meaning and reinforcing the theme. In the first book Nandi is explaining the caste system to Shiva, but fact is that there was no concept of caste system at that time, only Varnashram was there and that too in Vedic period. In this system society was divided on the basis of their profession, if profession changes Varna also changed. Amish in this book has written in detail about the caste, Bhadra said,

“They have a concept of specialization. So in addition to the Brahmins, they have group called Kshatriya who are the warriors and rulers. Even the women can be Kshatriya. They have Vaishyas, craftsman and traders and finally the Shudras who are farmers and workers.’
We can see clearly how the author here is referring the Varnashram as caste system.

The author has mentioned about many temples, although temples were not popular at that age. Shiva visits many temples and meets with different pundits and vasudeva’s, long discussions are also held there. Ramjanmabhoomi temple is there in Ayodha which is discussed in detail. When Shiva goes to Kashi he visits Kashivishvanath temple. In the temple lord Rudra only idol was there, as legend had it that lord Rudra only worked alone. The only partner was lady Mohini whose idol was at back room. There is also a Narsimha temple, at Magadh it is believed that lord Narsimha had lived many thousands of years before lord Rudra.

Shiva finds the symbol of AUM as a Nagas bracelet it was made of leather, burnt at the edges, when he sees it closely he noticed that the symbol was the symbol of AUM. At the amalgam of the top and the bottom curve of the AUM were two serpent heads. The third curve’s, surging out to the east ended at a sharp serpent head with its forked ounge striking out threateningly. This concept of AUM is very different from the concept of AUM mentioned in the Gita, chapter 17 as below:

“The formula AUM, Tat, Sat is the triple definition of Brahmin, by whom the Brahmanas, the Vedas and sacrifices were created of old”,23/17.

“therefore with the pronunciation of AUM the acts of sacrifice, giving and asking as laid down in the rules are always commenced by the knowers of the Brahman” 24/17.

“ with the pronounciation of Tat and without the desire of fruit are performed the various acts of sacrifice asking and giving by the seekers of liberation”,24/17.

“Sat means good and it means existence”26/17.

Honor killing was there. Parashuram’s mother was Khastriya and his father was a Brahmin so his mother’s family killed his father. This honor killing is mentioned by Amish in the novel, “Honor kill?”
Parashuram looked at Shiva. ‘when the people in the clan believe a woman in a community has insulted the honor of her family, the clan has the right to kill that woman and everyone else with her to avenge their loss of face.’

Social structure of the novel is also compact their way of living, their dress, some social concepts, rituals are mentioned in these works. The festival of Rakshabandhan is celebrated. These people believe in superstitions. Kashi had been built only along he western banks of the river meander, leaving its eastern banks bare. It was believed that whenever built on eastern banks it would suffer a terrible fate.

So we can say that his novel is excavations of the mythical and historical past but have relevance even today. In the fifth chapter Shiva went to visit the Brahma temple and was stunned by its architectural beauty. The historical fact is that at that time there was no architecture during Indus valley civilization, it came during Mauryan empire. This is used by the novelist not in recreating old myths but in representing them to suit his artistic purpose only.

‘Staring the most beautiful he has ever seen. It was built entirely of white and pink marble. The ornate roof was topped by a giant triangular spire, like a giant ‘Namaste’ to the gods. Elaborate sculptures were carved upon every available space on the structure’.

In conclusion, we can say that Amish has succeeded in establishing socio-cultural and geographical unity, historical and religious (specially from Puranas) facts. All the main characters work for the welfare of all. The Trilogy is interesting to read. The historical facts, philosophies and mythical elements are used in modern forms. These facts will strengthen the unity in diversity in our country.