



# Epics Reimagined: The Influence of Epics on Modern Indian Writing in English

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**Citation:** Dannana Sai Gayatri et al. (2024), Epics Reimagined: The Influence of Epics on Modern Indian Writing in English, *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 30(4) 11242-11244

Doi: 10.53555/kuey.v30i4.10036

## ARTICLE INFO

## ABSTRACT

This research Paper explores how the Ramayana, and the Mahabharata, as classic Indian epics, act as catalysts for modern Indian English literature in reinventing the heritage, ethical labyrinth, and the universal question about human life. Through authors such as Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Devdutt Pattanaik, Sudha Murty, Samhita Arni and Ashwin Sanghi, the paper demonstrates how traditional Indian epics are still being remodelled to solve contemporary problems involving gender, individual identity, moral battles and social development. These authors reinterpret old stories in modern-world view enriching the cultural continuity of the epics and introduce new viewers to significant insights in their new context. Specific attention is paid to the ways Indian epics still operate in the thematic, structural, and ethical roots of contemporary Indian English fiction.

**Key Words:** Epic Retelling, Ramayana , Mahabharata, Cultural Identity, Mythology, Indian Writings in English

## Introduction:

The great legends of ancient India like Mahabharata and Ramayana now over older than five thousand years are considered the very backbone of truly Indian ethos which is most significantly comparable to the most moral, social and spiritual dimensions of modern Indian people. The themes explored by these writers remain important today in modern Indian English fiction to support proof of their ever endearing appearance and applicability to changing societies. Even as the evolution of the new prose in Indian English is concerned these epics have remained the inexhaustible sources of the inspiration, willing with a huge spectrum of the topics and the archetypes that the contemporary writers expertly interweave into their plots. In these pre-historical writings one can find philosophical study of man and his values and the universe, which make them rich for literary interpretation. Alongside the Ramayana, the Mahabharata carries qualities of the longest epic verse in the world and part of dharma (duty/righteousness) and karma (action/consequence). They are quite filled with end lying characters, plot and vast meaningful discourses propounded through philosophy and they still vibrate the conscience of the Indian mind. Distinguished poet and writer Rabindranath Tagore noted it correctly when he said both the Ramayana and the Mahabharata are not simply historical epics of India rather these are the ever vibrant books that are enlightening the generations. However, in the contemporary context, the latest authors enrich the heritage of the Indian English literature by using the moments of these epics to discuss the modern problems such as individuality, and ethical and political point of view and restraints. Sometimes it is easier to remain conservative and keep traditional myths and epics distant from recent problems in society, but these writers succeed in using the universally significant aspects of epics for their work and as

food for thought.

Indeed this paper intends to analyses how modern Indian English fiction utilizes two glorious epics; the Mahabharata and the Ramayana in order to re enunciate new stories acceptable in the contemporary society. In order to understand the contemporary significance of these epics, this research investigates selected texts by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Devdutt Pattanaik, Ashwin Sanghi, and Sudha Murty. The Palace of Illusions by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is a retelling of the Mahabharata episode from the point of view of Draupadi, an important character often in the shadow. Divakaruni's edition gives the reader opportunities to step in the skin of Draupadi, to learn about her wants and needs, to discover her view upon the events described in the Mahabharata. In changing the perspective of the story we not only repurpose the epic for the contemporary reader/viewer but also touch upon important topics like gender and agency. Similarly, Devdutt Pattanaik's works, such as *Jaya: The Illustrated Classic Books: An Illustrated Retelling of the Mahabharata* provides simple and updated interpretation of the epics focusing on the moral and philosophical aspects of the stories. Pattanaik recaptures these epics using both an ancient and a contemporary approach with social and cultural implications for the present day. For this reason, the contributions by Sudha Murty in the field of literature are of high value as they modernize the ancient values and studiously convey them to the readers of the 21st century.

Apart from making the great epics, Mahabharata and Ramayana more appealing through her works like *The Serpents Revenge* and *The Upside-Down King*, Murty also inscribes moral and ethical issues in the contemporary society in this own versions of the epics. She makes her work explain the principles reflected in these Scriptures, and this makes them appealing to children as well as adults.

Samhita Arni's "The Mahabharata: This books named "A Child's View" is a proper and fun guide to the Mahabharata where kids would always love to read and explore such stories which are of great importance in the world. The story is created by a child narrator that will make the reader easily identify with the creator of the story. "The Mahabharata: The effect of the epics of India upon the respective body of/products of modern Indian English Literary has been a subject of critical discussion and debate and the piece „A Child's View" by Samhita Arni is a testimony to continue to illustrate how they have influenced modern Indian English literature in the way it seeks to tell ancient stories for the contemporary generation. Arni is thus able to tell the epic in an engaging and easy for the young mind to understand by adopting the child narrator thus reconciling the traditional and the contemporary. This adaptation not only simplifies all the ideas and persons of the Mahabharata so that children can understand it but also shows how the epics of the past are a source for all modern stories. Although presented in a comical light, Arni's work still wisely connects to the original Mahabharata epic and applies it to modernity as a form of key message transmission. In doing so, "The Mahabharata: The literary analysis of the "A Child's View" show that the story supplements the work of critics and historians who discuss translated and transmitted epics and their impact in the present Indian English literary production.

Ashwin Sanghi's novel – *The Krishna Key* – is perhaps the best example of how deeply Indian epics impact today's Indian English writing. The plots and incidents of *My Gita* are inspired from the life of Krishna, though narrated by Sanghi in a mythical and extremely logical contemporary style. Connecting all these dots, Sanghi not only reimagines the ancient folklore of Krishna but also reinvents the discovery of India's heritage in an approachable format for people of the twenty-first century. Sanghi's novel demonstrates continuity of the value of these ancient stories by underlining their capability to retain interest through generations regardless of the distance and time difference.

"Epic has a special power and significance, and has a profound influence on the ways in which people understand their own existence and history." - J.R.R. Tolkien

### Conclusion

Thus, the presence of the Indian epics in contemporary Indian English novels is Deep and profound affecting contours of the plots, motifs, and the manner in which the story is delivered. But using resourcing and reinterpreting methods, aspiring writers based on epic like Mahabharata &

