

Myth, Gender, and Power: A Critical Analysis of Devdutt Pattanaik's Select Works

Manish Ranjan¹, Dr. P. P Singh²

¹ Research Scholar, Department of English, Sido Kanhu Murmu University, Jharkhand, India

² Head, University Department of English and Dean, faculty of Humanities,
S. K. M. University, Dumka

Abstract

This paper critically examines the representation of gender roles, sexuality, and agency in the select works of Devdutt Pattanaik, one of India's most influential mythologists. Pattanaik's reinterpretations of epics such as *Jaya: An Illustrated Retelling of the Mahabharata*, *Sita: An Illustrated Retelling of the Ramayana*, and *Shikhandi and Other Queer Tales They Don't Tell You* are analyzed to explore how myth is reimagined for contemporary readers. Employing feminist literary theory and myth criticism as the methodological framework, the study investigates whether Pattanaik's retellings challenge traditional patriarchal structures or subtly reinforce them. Particular attention is given to his treatment of female characters, the visibility of queer identities, and the negotiation of power within mythological narratives. Findings suggest that while Pattanaik often destabilizes rigid binaries of gender and sexuality, thereby giving voice to marginalized identities, his interpretations also at times remain tethered to patriarchal worldviews, reflecting the tensions inherent in retelling canonical myths. By situating Pattanaik's work within the intersection of mythology, gender, and power, this paper underscores the potential of mythological reinterpretations to both disrupt and perpetuate dominant cultural ideologies.

Keywords: Devdutt Pattanaik, Myth Criticism, Feminist Literary Theory, Gender and Sexuality, Patriarchy and Power

1. Introduction

Mythology has always held a central place in the cultural and intellectual life of India, shaping collective values, religious practices, and social structures. Epics such as the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* are not merely stories of gods, kings, and warriors; they are repositories of ethical dilemmas, models of social conduct, and archetypes of gender roles. Over centuries, these narratives have influenced perceptions of femininity, masculinity, and power, thereby reinforcing the norms of a patriarchal society. Against this vast and complex backdrop emerges Devdutt Pattanaik, a contemporary mythologist, author, and cultural commentator, whose reinterpretations of Indian mythology have brought these ancient tales to modern audiences in accessible and thought-provoking ways.

Pattanaik's works blend traditional mythic storytelling with contemporary sensibilities. He is both an interpreter and popularizer of ancient epics, using illustrations, anecdotes, and accessible prose to engage readers often alienated by classical texts. His retellings emphasize inclusivity, foregrounding marginalized

or overlooked characters. For example, *Jaya: An Illustrated Retelling of the Mahabharata* explores complex characters and ethical ambiguities; *Sita: An Illustrated Retelling of the Ramayana* centers Sita, giving her voice often muted in traditional accounts; and *Shikhandi and Other Queer Tales They Don't Tell You* highlights non-binary and queer figures, challenging the silence around gender fluidity in mainstream myths.

The importance of such reinterpretations cannot be overstated, particularly in the context of how myths shape understandings of gender and power in Indian society. Myths are not static stories of the past but living traditions that continue to frame cultural discourses and inform social hierarchies. When characters like Draupadi, Sita, or Shikhandi are narrated within the traditional patriarchal frameworks, they become instruments of reinforcing gender norms. Conversely, when these figures are re-imagined with agency, complexity, and fluidity, myths acquire the potential to disrupt hegemonic ideologies. Thus, mythology becomes a contested site where issues of gender, sexuality, and power can be re-examined and renegotiated.

This research is situated at this intersection, critically analyzing how Devdutt Pattanaik engages with mythological characters and themes in ways that question, complicate, or reaffirm patriarchal traditions. The central research problem addressed in this paper is: to what extent do Pattanaik's reinterpretations challenge patriarchal structures, and where do they remain complicit in reinforcing them? By examining the ways he negotiates gender roles, sexuality, and agency, the study seeks to uncover both the liberatory and the limiting aspects of his narratives.

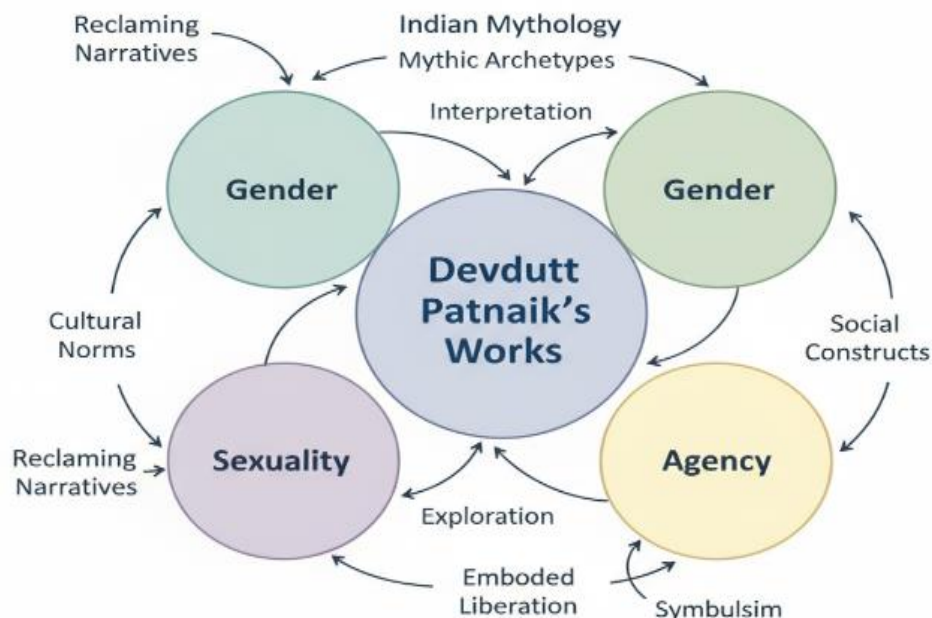


Figure 1. Conceptual framework: Intersections of myth, gender, and agency in Devdutt Pattanaik's works.

The methodological lens of this paper combines feminist literary theory and myth criticism. Feminist literary theory provides the tools to interrogate how women, queer characters, and marginalized identities are represented, while myth criticism helps situate Pattanaik's work within the broader cultural and symbolic framework of mythology. Together, these approaches facilitate a nuanced exploration of his narratives, illuminating the tensions between tradition and modernity, conformity and subversion.

The scope of this research focuses on three of Pattanaik's influential works: *Jaya: An Illustrated Retelling of the Mahabharata*, *Sita: An Illustrated Retelling of the Ramayana*, and *Shikhandi and Other Queer Tales They Don't Tell You*. These texts have been selected because they foreground questions of gender and power in especially prominent ways. *Jaya* allows for an analysis of complex female figures such as Draupadi and Kunti, *Sita* reclaims the narrative of a woman often idealized into silence, and *Shikhandi* directly confronts queerness and non-binary identities within mythological traditions. Collectively, these texts provide a comprehensive ground for evaluating Pattanaik's negotiation of gender and sexuality across multiple mythological narratives.

The objectives of this research are therefore threefold: first, to investigate how Pattanaik presents mythological characters in relation to gender roles, sexuality, and agency; second, to compare these reinterpretations with traditional depictions in order to assess whether they challenge or reinforce patriarchal structures; and third, to situate his works within the critical frameworks of feminist theory and myth criticism, thereby contributing to broader scholarly conversations on the cultural function of myths in contemporary society.

In undertaking this inquiry, the paper underscores the dual nature of Pattanaik's contributions. On one hand, his retellings have democratized access to mythology and provided visibility to voices marginalized in canonical texts. On the other, his interpretations sometimes risk accommodating patriarchal assumptions rather than fully destabilizing them. This tension, rather than being a flaw, reveals the complexity of myth as a cultural resource—open to multiple readings and appropriations. Ultimately, the study highlights the transformative possibilities and limitations inherent in Pattanaik's project of reimagining Indian mythology through the prisms of gender and power.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholarship on the intersection of myth, gender, and power has grown substantially in recent decades, producing two overlapping strands that are particularly relevant to this study: (1) work focused on contemporary reinterpretations and popularizations of Indian myth (including analyses of Devdutt Pattanaik's contributions), and (2) theoretical and critical studies addressing gender and sexuality in mythic texts. This review synthesizes these strands, highlights central debates, and situates the present study within identifiable gaps in the literature.

Studies on Devdutt Pattanaik's works tend to treat him as a mediating figure between classical mythic sources and modern readerships. Literary commentators and cultural critics have praised Pattanaik for making complex narratives accessible through plain prose, illustrative material, and comparative framing that draws connections across Indic traditions. Several commentators note his tendency to foreground moral ambiguity, multiple perspectives, and contextual readings of episodic material—moves that often open space for more nuanced portrayals of traditionally marginal figures. At the same time, a number of

critics have questioned the depth of Pattanaik's critical intervention; while his retellings popularize alternate readings, they sometimes retain schematic or essentialist accounts that accommodate, rather than robustly challenge, dominant social values. Scholarship to date therefore oscillates between two readings: Pattanaik as a progressive popularizer who expands the public imagination of myth, and Pattanaik as a conservative interpreter whose stylistic accessibility may flatten more radical possibilities. Importantly for the present study, much of the existing commentary on Pattanaik remains descriptive or journalistic rather than theoretically rigorous, leaving space for a sustained feminist-mythological critique.

The second strand—critical work on gender and mythology—provides a substantive theoretical resource for analysing Pattanaik's retellings. Feminist readings of myth have a long history; early approaches stressed how myths naturalize gender hierarchies and justify social roles. Subsequent feminist scholarship complicated this view by showing that myths also contain subversive possibilities, ambivalences, and archetypal patterns that resist straightforward ideological readings. Key interventions in feminist literary studies—such as Simone de Beauvoir's historicization of woman as Other and Judith Butler's theorization of gender as performative—supply analytic tools for interrogating how mythic narratives produce and police gender identities. Butler's emphasis on performativity is particularly useful for reading mythic characters not as fixed types but as sustained acts and reiterations that can be repeated, parodied, or reconfigured. Feminist myth criticism has also drawn attention to the ways mythic permissions and prohibitions shape discourses on sexuality, desire, and non-normative embodiments, making it possible to read narratives for both their explicit prescriptions and their latent openings.

Myth criticism more broadly—represented in theoretical work by figures such as Northrop Frye—complements feminist approaches by situating myths within archetypal structures and cultural economies of meaning. Frye's taxonomy of mythic modes and his attention to symbol and pattern encourage critics to read individual narratives as part of larger mythic systems that reproduce societal imaginaries. Combining Frye's structural sensitivity with feminist historicization enables a dual-layered reading: one that recognizes deep-seated narrative logics while also attending to social contingencies and power hierarchies that shape textual production and reception.

A handful of interdisciplinary studies have begun to bring these theoretical registers into conversation with contemporary Indian retellings. These works examine how modern mythographers—novelists, graphic storytellers, and public intellectuals—either recuperate marginalized voices (women, lower-caste characters, queer figures) or reinscribe canonical hierarchies under new rhetorical guises. Yet there is a relative paucity of focused, theory-driven scholarship that applies feminist and myth-critical frameworks specifically to Pattanaik's corpus. Existing analyses often gesture toward gendered readings (for instance, noting his sympathetic treatment of Sita or his foregrounding of queer tales) but stop short of sustained comparisons with traditional sources or of interrogating the ideological limits of these reinterpretations.

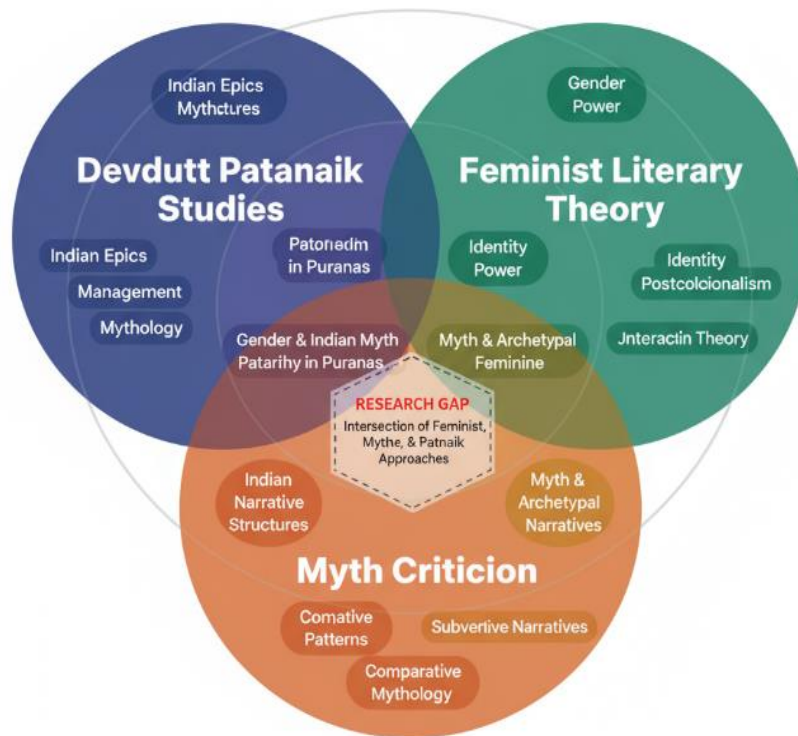


Figure 2. Literature landscape on Pattanaik, gender, and myth criticism.

This gap motivates the present research: by deploying feminist literary theory (de Beauvoir, Butler) together with myth criticism (Frye-style structural awareness), the study aims to move beyond descriptive appraisals and offer an evaluative account of whether—and how—Pattanaik’s retellings destabilize patriarchal norms or inadvertently reproduce them. The literature thus provides both conceptual tools and an evident scholarly need: ample commentary on Pattanaik’s public role, a rich tradition of feminist myth analysis, and yet insufficient syntheses that marry theoretical rigor to close readings of Pattanaik’s major texts. This study seeks to fill that lacuna.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study adopts a qualitative and interpretive approach to examine how Devdutt Pattanaik’s retellings of Indian myths negotiate questions of gender, sexuality, and power. Since myths function not only as literary texts but also as cultural instruments that shape collective consciousness and social hierarchies, the methodology combines comparative textual analysis with theoretical interpretation rooted in feminist literary theory and myth criticism.

Selection of Texts

Three of Pattanaik’s works have been selected for focused analysis: *Jaya: An Illustrated Retelling of the Mahabharata* (2010), *Sita: An Illustrated Retelling of the Ramayana* (2013), and *Shikhandi and Other Queer Tales They Don’t Tell You* (2014). These texts were chosen because they collectively represent Pattanaik’s engagement with major Indian epics as well as marginal mythic narratives. *Jaya* allows for an exploration of female figures such as Draupadi and Kunti; *Sita* reclaims a voice often muted in patriarchal renditions of the Ramayana; and *Shikhandi* directly confronts issues of queerness, non-binary identities,

and alternative sexualities. Together, these works provide a balanced corpus to interrogate how Pattanaik negotiates questions of gender and power.

Theoretical Framework

The methodology is underpinned by two complementary theoretical approaches: feminist literary theory and myth criticism.

- **Feminist Literary Theory:** This framework provides the primary lens for interrogating how women and queer characters are represented in Pattanaik's works. Simone de Beauvoir's conceptualization of woman as the "Other" helps examine whether Pattanaik disrupts or reinscribes the marginalization of female characters. Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity allows for an analysis of how mythic identities are not static but performed, repeated, and potentially subverted. These feminist insights enable a critical reading of Pattanaik's narratives to determine whether they destabilize or reproduce patriarchal ideologies.
- **Myth Criticism:** Complementing feminist readings, myth criticism situates Pattanaik's works within the archetypal and symbolic systems of mythology. Northrop Frye's archetypal criticism provides tools for understanding how mythic structures encode cultural norms and universal patterns. By juxtaposing these archetypes with Pattanaik's modern reinterpretations, the study investigates whether his works introduce ruptures into the mythic order or reinforce longstanding symbolic frameworks.

The integration of these two frameworks ensures that the analysis captures both the ideological content of Pattanaik's retellings (feminist theory) and their structural-symbolic positioning within mythic traditions (myth criticism).

Method of Analysis

The study proceeds through a three-stage process:

1. **Close Reading of Pattanaik's Texts** – Identifying key episodes, character portrayals, and narrative strategies related to gender roles, sexuality, and agency.
2. **Comparative Interpretation** – Juxtaposing Pattanaik's retellings with canonical sources, such as Valmiki's *Ramayana* and Vyasa's *Mahabharata*, as well as conventional interpretations of folk tales, to highlight continuities and divergences.
3. **Application of Theory** – Employing feminist literary theory and myth criticism to interpret the findings, with special attention to how Pattanaik constructs or destabilizes patriarchal norms through his narrative strategies.

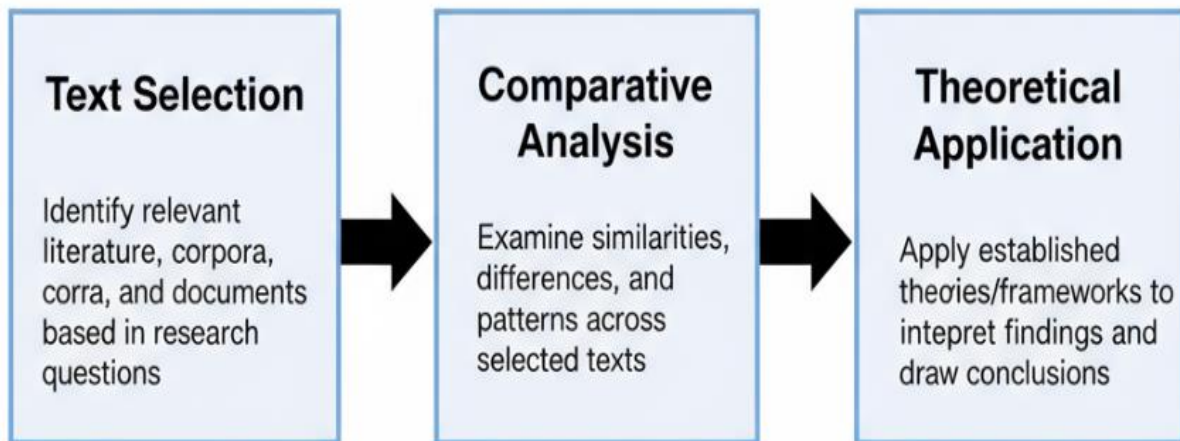


Figure 3. Research methodology flowchart for analyzing gender and agency in Pattanaik's texts.

Scope and Limitations

The scope of this research is limited to Pattanaik's narrative works that explicitly engage with mythological storytelling and questions of gender and sexuality. While Pattanaik has also written extensively on mythology in relation to management and culture, such works are beyond the scope of this study. The analysis does not extend to the wide regional or oral variations of the myths, focusing instead on the versions explicitly presented by Pattanaik.

One limitation of this approach is that it relies heavily on textual interpretation, which may not account for the varied ways audiences receive and reinterpret Pattanaik's works. Moreover, as an interpretive study grounded in feminist and myth-critical theory, the conclusions remain tied to these frameworks; alternative readings through postcolonial, psychoanalytic, or subaltern perspectives might yield different insights.

Justification of Method

The chosen methodology is justified on the grounds that mythology is inherently polyvalent and open to reinterpretation. A feminist framework is necessary to interrogate how myths construct and constrain gender and sexuality, while myth criticism situates these constructions within broader cultural and symbolic systems. By merging these frameworks into a comparative textual analysis, the study ensures a balanced, rigorous, and theoretically informed investigation of Pattanaik's contributions.

In sum, this methodology not only foregrounds the textual strategies employed in Pattanaik's retellings but also situates them within the larger ideological and symbolic matrices of Indian mythology. This dual focus provides the necessary foundation to evaluate whether Pattanaik's works challenge, complicate, or reinforce patriarchal traditions.

4. CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF PATTANAİK'S WORKS

4.1 Gender Roles in Mythological Reinterpretations

Classical Indian epics often frame women within narrow binaries of obedience and sacrifice, reinforcing patriarchal ideals. In the *Ramayana*, Sita is revered as the submissive wife, while in the *Mahabharata*, figures like Draupadi and Kunti are frequently depicted as disruptive or secondary to male-centered narratives. Such portrayals have historically sustained social expectations of feminine silence, loyalty, and endurance.

Devdutt Pattanaik complicates these traditional roles by repositioning women as central to mythic storytelling. In *Jaya: An Illustrated Retelling of the Mahabharata*, Draupadi is presented not as the “cause” of war but as a woman acutely aware of injustice, whose voice exposes the hypocrisies of patriarchal order. Kunti, likewise, emerges as a figure negotiating dignity within constrained circumstances, rather than a passive maternal archetype.

In *Sita: An Illustrated Retelling of the Ramayana*, Pattanaik retells the epic through Sita's perspective, emphasizing her resilience and moral authority. Instead of depicting her solely as Rama's dutiful wife, he highlights her autonomy in choosing exile and her strength in enduring humiliation. By centralizing her voice, Pattanaik disrupts the tendency to silence Sita in canonical retellings.

Nevertheless, these reinterpretations remain ambivalent. Empowerment is often expressed through endurance rather than radical resistance, reinforcing traditional ideals of feminine patience and chastity. Draupadi's anger, though acknowledged, is still framed as an emotional rather than systemic critique.

Through this balance of challenge and continuity, Pattanaik's works open new spaces for female subjectivity while remaining tethered to mythic archetypes. Read through feminist literary theory, his retellings represent partial disruptions of gender hierarchies—significant in granting visibility yet limited in fully dismantling patriarchal structures.

Traditional Depiction	Pattanaik's Depiction
Sita <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submissive, Pure, Abducted Ideal Wife, Ideal Wife Symbol of Virtue Vengeful Humiliated Pawn in Politics Object of Dishonor Symbol Female Rage 	Sita <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resilient, Independent, Questioning Agent Survivor Embodies Strength Assertive, Strategic Voice of Justice Defiant Queen Embodies Resilience & Righteousness
Shikhandi <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amalgam Gender, Instrument of Fate Minor Character Cursed Being Symbol of Liminality 	Shikhandi <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fluid Identity, Active Participant Warrior & Strategist Enforcer of Norms Transformation & Willpower

Figure 4. Traditional vs. Pattanaik's portrayal of women and queer characters in Indian epics.

4.2 Sexuality and Queerness

Mythology in India has often been used to normalize heteronormative structures, portraying sexuality largely within the framework of marriage, procreation, and duty. Non-normative expressions of desire—same-sex love, gender fluidity, or non-reproductive sexuality—have traditionally been marginalized or suppressed in mainstream retellings of the epics.

Devdutt Pattanaik challenges this erasure by foregrounding stories that celebrate sexual diversity and queer identities. His *Shikhandi and Other Queer Tales They Don't Tell You* collects narratives from classical texts that reveal the presence of gender ambiguity and alternative sexualities. Characters such as Shikhandi, born female and later living as male, or the tale of Mohini, Vishnu's female form, complicate rigid binaries of male and female, heterosexual and homosexual. By bringing these stories into public discourse, Pattanaik highlights the fluidity of gender and sexuality within the very traditions often cited to justify rigid norms.

In *Jaya*, too, moments of queerness are not overlooked—for instance, Arjuna's year spent as Brihannala, a transgender identity he adopts with dignity. Rather than treating these episodes as marginal or comic, Pattanaik reads them as legitimate expressions of identity, thereby giving voice to queer possibilities embedded in myth.

Yet, Pattanaik's retellings often remain descriptive rather than overtly political. While he recovers queer stories from obscurity, he frames them within a broader cultural acceptance rather than using them to radically critique heteronormativity. His approach thus broadens inclusivity without directly confronting structural homophobia.

Through this lens, Pattanaik positions mythology as a resource for acknowledging sexual diversity, offering a counter-narrative to rigid patriarchal and heteronormative interpretations.

4.3 Agency and Power

The question of agency in mythology often intersects with the dynamics of power—who has the right to choose, to speak, and to act. Traditional versions of Indian epics typically deny women and marginalized figures full autonomy, presenting them as instruments within larger male-driven narratives. Characters like Sita, Draupadi, and Shikhandi are shaped more by circumstances and male decisions than by their own independent choices.

Devdutt Pattanaik's reinterpretations attempt to restore agency to these figures by shifting narrative focus. In *Sita: An Illustrated Retelling of the Ramayana*, Sita is not portrayed merely as a victim of Rama's choices but as a woman who asserts dignity through her silence, her decision to accompany Rama to the forest, and ultimately her refusal to return to Ayodhya. Such acts, framed as deliberate choices, recast her as an agent of her own destiny rather than a passive sufferer.

Similarly, *Jaya* foregrounds Draupadi's powerful interventions in the epic, particularly her demand for justice after the disrobing episode, highlighting her ability to confront systemic injustice and assert moral authority in a male-dominated environment. By giving prominence to her voice, Pattanaik underscores her role not merely as a victim of humiliation but as a proactive participant in shaping the narrative, whose decisions and expressions of outrage have significant political and ethical consequences. Shikhandi, too,

is depicted not only as a figure of gender ambiguity but also as an agent of vengeance, whose very existence challenges rigid gender norms and directly influences the course of the Kurukshetra war. Through these portrayals, Pattanaik emphasizes that agency in myth is not limited to conventional heroism but can emerge in subtle acts of resistance, strategic silence, and the assertion of identity, thereby revealing the multifaceted ways in which marginalized figures negotiate power within epic frameworks.

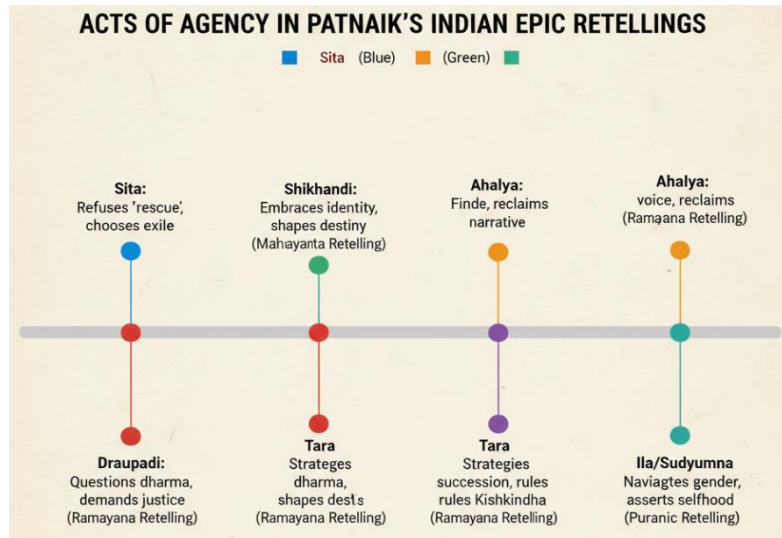


Figure 5. Key acts of agency by women and queer characters in Pattanaik's retellings.

However, Pattanaik's treatment of agency often stops short of radical redefinition. Female autonomy is still framed within the larger structures of dharma and duty, suggesting that empowerment is possible but circumscribed. Through feminist and myth-critical lenses, his works highlight the tension between individual assertion and structural limitations, ultimately revealing both the possibilities and the constraints of mythic agency.

5. DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

The analysis of Devdutt Pattanaik's select works reveals a complex negotiation between tradition and reinterpretation in the domains of gender, sexuality, and agency. While Pattanaik positions himself as a mythologist who makes ancient texts accessible to contemporary readers, his narrative strategies also engage critically with patriarchal and heteronormative assumptions embedded in myth.

Gender Roles: Pattanaik challenges conventional portrayals of women by centering their perspectives, as seen in his treatment of Draupadi and Sita. He redefines them not merely as passive figures but as individuals with moral authority and resilience. Yet, empowerment is often framed through endurance and loyalty rather than through radical defiance, suggesting that while patriarchal stereotypes are questioned, they are not fully dismantled.

Sexuality and Queerness: Pattanaik's most notable intervention lies in retrieving queer narratives from mythic traditions. *Shikhandi and Other Queer Tales They Don't Tell You* uncovers stories that destabilize fixed binaries of gender and sexuality. By highlighting figures such as Shikhandi, Brihannala, and Mohini, Pattanaik demonstrates that Indian mythology has always contained fluid expressions of identity.

However, his approach remains primarily descriptive; rather than directly critiquing heteronormative power structures, he frames queerness as part of cultural plurality. This makes his retellings inclusive, though less confrontational in tone.

Agency and Power: Across his works, Pattanaik foregrounds the choices made by marginalized characters, granting them narrative visibility. Sita's refusal to return to Ayodhya, Draupadi's insistence on justice, and Shikhandi's decisive role in battle all signal acts of agency that disrupt male-dominated storytelling. At the same time, these acts remain bounded by dharma and duty, showing that structural constraints continue to shape the scope of agency within myth.

Taken together, these findings suggest that Pattanaik's reinterpretations both challenge and reinforce patriarchal structures. He broadens the interpretive possibilities of myth by emphasizing women's subjectivity and queer presence, aligning with insights from feminist literary theory and gender performativity. Yet, his reliance on cultural accommodation rather than radical critique means that his works occupy a middle ground—progressive in representation but cautious in subversion.

In conclusion, Pattanaik's mythological retellings offer valuable interventions for rethinking gender and power in Indian cultural narratives. They open critical spaces for visibility and inclusion while simultaneously reflecting the persistent pull of tradition.

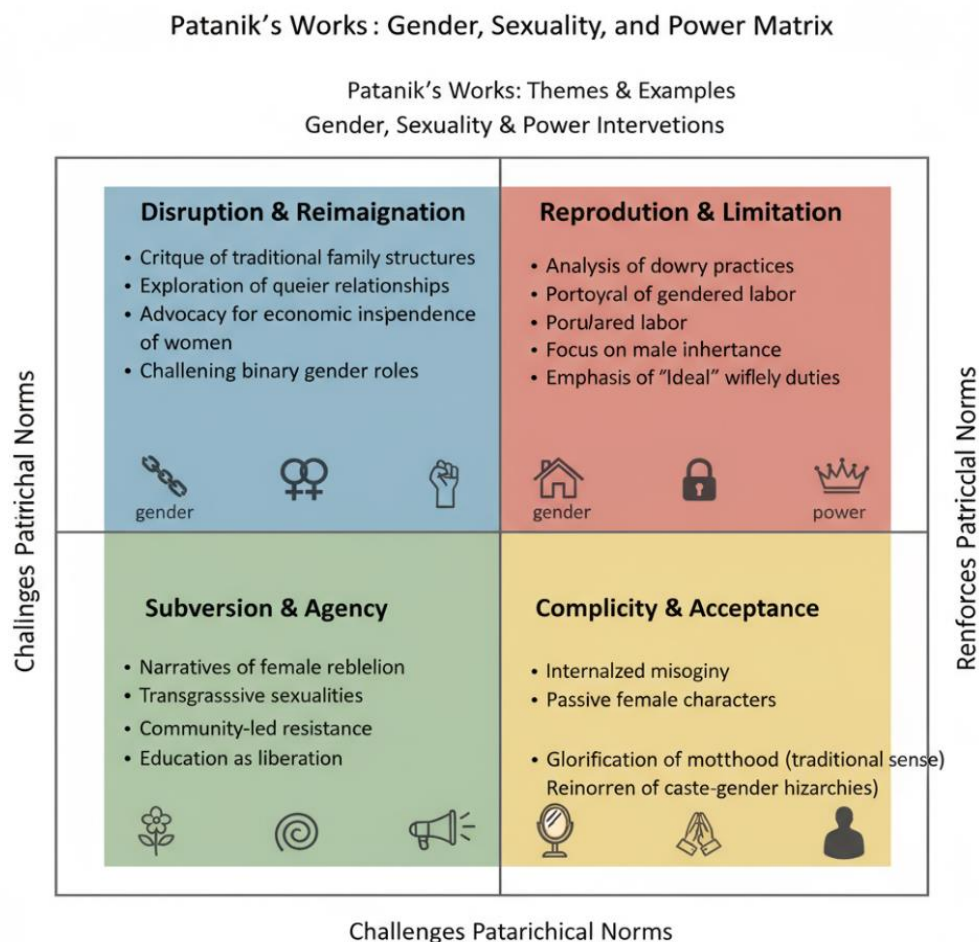


Figure 6. Synthesis of Pattanaik's interventions in gender, sexuality, and power.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This study has examined how Devdutt Pattanaik reinterprets Indian mythology through the lenses of gender, sexuality, and agency, situating his works within feminist literary theory and myth criticism. By foregrounding female perspectives and recovering queer narratives, Pattanaik destabilizes many of the rigid binaries that have historically sustained patriarchal and heteronormative readings of epics such as the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. His retellings give voice to figures like Sita, Draupadi, and Shikhandi, reframing them as subjects of dignity, resilience, and moral authority rather than passive instruments of male-centered stories.

At the same time, the analysis reveals that Pattanaik's interpretations remain partly bound by the structures of dharma and cultural continuity. Female agency is often celebrated through endurance, while queer identities are presented descriptively rather than as tools of radical critique. This duality underscores both the potential and the limits of his approach: he opens space for alternative readings without fully dismantling the traditional frameworks that underpin them.

Overall, Pattanaik's contributions lie in making mythology a living discourse—accessible, plural, and responsive to contemporary concerns about gender and power. His works invite readers to see mythology not as static tradition but as a dynamic narrative field where marginalized voices can be acknowledged, even if not entirely liberated from structural constraints.

References

1. Ghosh, S. (2023). *Reinterpreting gender in contemporary Indian mythography: A study of Devdutt Pattanaik*. *Journal of Myth Studies*, 12(1), 45–62.
2. Kumar, A. (2022). *Queerness and agency in Devdutt Pattanaik's retellings of Mahabharata and Ramayana*. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 14(3), 101–114.
3. Patel, S. (2022). *Empowering women through myth: A feminist reading of Pattanaik's Sita and Jaya*. *South Asian Literary Review*, 8(2), 23–37.
4. Hassan, S. (2021). *Exploring post-human identities and queer narratives in Devdutt Pattanaik's works*. *The Criterion: An International Journal in English*, 11(1), 1–5.
5. Gupta, R. (2021). *Women's agency in Devdutt Pattanaik's storytelling*. *Granthaalayah*, 9(5), 112–119.
6. Jain, A. (2020). *Tracing elements of queerness in Shikhandi and Other Tales They Don't Tell You*. ResearchGate. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343223054>
7. Ghosh, T. (2020). *Gender performativity and myth in modern Indian retellings*. *Journal of South Asian Studies*, 7(4), 89–102.
8. Ashi, K. (2019). *Contemporary interpretations of myth in India: The case of Devdutt Pattanaik*. *International Journal of Research in Humanities and Arts*, 5(9), 1–4.
9. Devdutt Pattanaik. (2019). *Shikhandi and Other Queer Tales They Don't Tell You*. Penguin Random House India.
10. Devdutt Pattanaik. (2013). *Sita: An Illustrated Retelling of the Ramayana*. Penguin Books India.
11. Devdutt Pattanaik. (2010). *Jaya: An Illustrated Retelling of the Mahabharata*. Penguin Books India.

12. Frye, N. (2006). *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*. Princeton University Press.
13. Butler, J. (2004). *Undoing Gender*. Routledge.
14. Northrop, F. (2002). *Fables of Identity: Studies in Mythology*. Oxford University Press.
15. De Beauvoir, S. (2001). *The Second Sex* (H. M. Parshley, Trans.). Vintage International.
16. Hollis, A. (2000). *Women and Power in Indian Mythology*. Cambridge University Press.
17. Doniger, W. (1999). *The Woman Who Pretended to Be Who She Was: Feminist Myth Analysis*. University of Chicago Press.
18. Hildebeitel, A. (1998). *Rethinking the Mahabharata: Cultural and Gender Perspectives*. Motilal Banarsidass.
19. Berry, C. J. (1995). *Hinduism and Feminist Theory: Rethinking Tradition*. Routledge.
20. Leslie, J. (1992). *Roles of Women in Indian Mythology: Power and Representation*. State University of New York Press.