



## **Articulating the Art: An Appraisal of the Emerging Trend of Graphic Novels in the Contemporary Indian English Writing in reference to Amruta Patil's Works**

**Dr.Srinidhi. B**

**Journal for Educators, Teachers and Trainers, Vol. 13 (4)**

<https://jett.labosfor.com/>

Date of reception: 11 Apr 2022

Date of revision: 16 July 2022

Date of acceptance: 24 July 2022

**Dr.Srinidhi. B (2022). Articulating the Art: An Appraisal of the Emerging Trend of Graphic Novels in the Contemporary Indian English Writing in reference to Amruta Patil's Works *Journal for Educators, Teachers and Trainers*, Vol. 13(4). 55 – 59.**

---

<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor of English, Sathyabama Institute of Science and Technology, Chennai 600119



## **Articulating the Art: An Appraisal of the Emerging Trend of Graphic Novels in the Contemporary Indian English Writing in reference to Amruta Patil's Works**

**Dr.Srinidhi. B**

Assistant Professor of English, Sathyabama Institute of Science and Technology. Chennai 600119

### **ABSTRACT**

In olden days, the art of storytelling in the Indian sub-continent was expressed through spoken words. The significant facet of story narration involved some visual experiences that engaged the listeners both literate and illiterate enjoy and explore their own history, tradition and culture of India as they heed to Indian stories like Mahabharata, Ramayana and other texts. However, the dawn of written texts gradually made the traditional storytelling insignificant and favored only the educated. There are crowds who prefer watching adapted movies than books. Neither the adapted movies give major insights of the story of the book nor are all good books adapted. Regardless, the growth of the graphic novels began to grasp the attention of mass population including the illiterate as well as children who are reluctant to read. Graphic novels also help non readers understand the story through the captivating images of the story if words are hard. The essence of Indian Graphic novels is the visibility of Indian life, culture, tradition and customs through pictures thereby making the subject clear and percipient. In recent time, the Indian author Amruta Patil made her wide contribution to the growth of Indian Graphic Novels. She is also the first female graphic novelist. This paper aims to recognize her works towards the development of Indian Graphic Novels and also her prudent attention to the themes of her works which touches upon gender politics, social issues, ecological awareness and recreating mythology for contemporary readers. This paper explores all her works that include Kari, Adiparva: Churning of the Ocean, Sauptik: Blood and Flowers and Aranyaka: Book of the Forest. Being a professional visual artist, the subject of her works is strongly portrayed through her illustration incorporated with acrylic painting, collage, watercolor and Charcoal. Her works are indeed a major initiation to the growth of Indian graphic novels.

**Keywords:** Graphic novels, art, contemporary, storytelling, Indian life

### **Objective**

- To focus on the growth of Indian Graphic Novels as a genre in Indian writing in English.
- To highlight the themes of Indian Graphic Novels that are of contemporary relevance.
- To recognize the contribution of AmrutaPatil to the progressive development of Indian Graphic Novels.

### **Uniqueness of the Paper**

This paper explores Graphic novels as a developing genre in the contemporary Indian Writing in English and analyse the works by India's first female Graphic Novelist, Amruta Patil. Also, the works chosen are less explored for academic papers until now. Hence this paper and its analysis are original and latest.

### **Finding**

Earlier Graphic narratives are contained in Comic books but not developed as novels and targeted only Children readers whereas this paper explores the evolution of Indian graphic novels and its expansion of its popularity among readers of all age groups because of its strong subjects like social, political and contemporary issues. AmrutaPatil's works are attributed to such contemporary relevance and reconnoiter how her art work speaks the story.

### **Structure**

- Introduction
- Indian Graphic Novels- Objective

- AmrutaPatil- Uniqueness of the paper
- Fusion of art and text: an appraisal of AmrutaPatil's works- Finding
- Conclusion
- Suggestion for further study
- Work Cited

## INTRODUCTION

The main aim of Graphic Novels seeks to gain attention of children and their interest in reading books. Nevertheless, Graphic Novels became appealing to readers of all age groups. However, the popularity of Indian Graphic Novels limited to children and sometimes young adults as the subject of Indian Graphic Novels revolved around stories of animals and moral stories for children contained in series of Indian comics like Amar Chitra Katha, Panchatantra and Tinkle. It was rather a comic book of wide ranges of stories than a novel.

### Indian Graphic Novels

The history of Indian Graphic Novels began in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. It represented mythology, day today life and fantasy which also offered a deep understanding of the diversity of culture and tradition of India. Amar Chitra Katha was the first Indian comic book by AnantPai started in 1967. Compared to Graphic Novels around the world, the evolution of Indian graphic novels emerged behind time. It became a fast-emerging area of study only in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The first Indian Graphic Novel River of Stories was written and illustrated by Orijit Sen in 1994. Not only did the genre evolved from being a series of comic book to a genre like novel but also there was thematical evolution depicting social, cultural and political issues of the society and outreached readers of all age groups with its fascinating pictures.

In recent time, there are many authors contributing to Indian Graphic Novels such as Sarnath Banerjee's Corridor (2004), The Barn Owl's Wondrous Capers (2007), The Harappa Flies (2011) and etc., Naseer Ahmed's Kahmir Pending (2007), Saraswati Nepal's Sita, Daughter of the Earth (2011), Chhotu: A Tale of Patition and Love (2019) and few others. The growth of Graphic Novels in the current period is also because nowadays people find more attraction to books with pictures but not every such book is chosen. It also depends on the picture illustrations in a book that plays a significant part in building the interest of the readers. One such author of Graphic Novels who earned popularity through her visual arts and incorporation of modern techniques in the art work of her Graphic Novels is Amruta Patil. Not only her themes are contemporary but also the exhibition of graphic arts in her works that dynamically revealed the in-depth of her characters and the storyline.

### Amruta Patil

Born in Pune in 1979, April, Amruta Patil became recognized as the first female Indian Graphic Novelist. She has an independent conventional visual style that spans watercolor, charcoal, acrylic painting and collage making her Graphic Novels more aesthetic. She has employed bold expressions in representing characters from Indian mythology to expose social issues, political problems, and environmental exploitation made relevant for modern readers.

Graphic Novels being the combination of text and pictures where pictures also support and provide context for stories, they remain exciting and easy to understand. AmrutaPatil has utilized graphic novels to expose recurring themes like myth, sustainable living, sexuality, identity, environment and oral traditions. By this mean, some of the vital subjects of the society is reached to masses and also relatable to the modern society. Not only that, even reading mythology becomes easier and offers a deep insight of the story through which readers gain knowledge on India's ancient history, tradition and culture.

### Fusion of art and text: An Appraisal of Amruta Patil's works

Her first debut novel Kari (2008), is a contemporary story centered around the search for self in a society mired in difference and discrimination. Kari is a lesbian protagonist of the novel finds herself alone in the heterosexually culture around her and undergo different emotional changes. There is much complexity in the story but the visuals in her novel convey mood and emotions in a way that's more visceral and immersive. Her work of art was more unapologetically raw illustrations. Being a queer subject, which are ignored and draws criticism sometimes, this piece of art expresses the author's ability to use pertinent vocabulary with sheer mastery to demonstrate obscure situation. The art form is pleasant to the eyes and also depicts untold statements subtly. Patil reveals through the novel how a progressive and modern city continues to harbor unconscious biases and highly heterosexual understanding of society.

AdiParva: Churning of the Oceans (2012) is Patil's second Graphic Novel. People like reading epics when it is portrayed through illustrations and that is one of the reasons many people know epic through media arts and not mostly by books. Not only adults but also children of modern society enjoy epic through Graphic Novels and Amruta Patil's AdiParva: Churning of the Oceans contains enchanting visuals, artist's creativity and imagination while introducing the various characters and backstory of Mahabharata. Patil included the

philosophical aspects of Mahabharata that connects with the contemporary readers. The artwork employed in this novel is more like collages and pastel paintings. Her visual allusions swirls across boundaries like Aphrodite arising out of water, Tibetan lotuses, Gandhari wearing a Kaftan, Kunti wears a Bengali saree white and red while Madri is in salwar Kameez. Through her art, she also exposes the class division prevailed in the Vedic times. She used darker skin tones for the poor, the asuras and the lower caste, while Vishnu and Shiva are elevated to blue, jungle roaming rishis in tanned dark. The uniqueness of the novel is Patil's imaginative timelines which includes both Vedic time and also the future sequence of it. Overall, a retelling with pinch of sarcasm adds more fascination to the art work as well as the story.

The third novel Sauptik: Blood and Flower is a sequel of Adiparva: Churning of Oceans which revolves around the main character Ashwattama from Mahabharata who narrates the story of his unfortunate immortality. The story deals with aftermath the eighteen days war. Patil's choice of words accompanies her graphics and signifies contemporary relevance. She employs the old tradition of story telling narrative in her novel and Ashwattama is the "Sutradahaar" (Story teller) in this work. Amruta Patil raises her voice for tribals and nature with enthralling pictures of fire, water, air, earth and sky. The philosophical elements are highlighted in this novel. Battles and scenarios come alive in the magnificence of her art work.

The last produced novel of AmrutaPatil is Aranyaka: Book of the Forest co-authored with DevduttPattanaik and yet another story inspired by Vedic times. The author explores on how every living being started their life from the forest and eventually taken away from nature through domestication and evolution of the civilization. The use of watercolor and soft pencils in this novel gives a subtle effect to enjoy the visual pleasure of the novel. AmrutaPatil has achieved in making contemporary relevance of ecological awareness from the novel by drawing everyday observations of flora and fauna and their significance. This novel also involves the presence of storytelling narrator who is Katyayani, the main protagonist of the novel. There are several underlying social messages incorporated in the novel like ecological awareness, women empowerment and importance of food in an individual's life.

The Indian Graphic Novels is welcomed much among the readers not only because of its distinct style but most importantly the moral messages that are relevant to the contemporary social situations. The responsibility as an author, AmrutaPatil has taken much efforts to touch upon some vital subjects that every individual should be known of including queer challenges, Storytelling tradition, introduction to Mahabharata and other perspectives relatable to modern times and eco-conscious living. The content of her works became meaningful and alive due to the visual experiences that the author employed dynamically in her works. AmrutaPatil's different use of paintings like acrylics, water color, pencils and her images became aesthetically captivating and made the art speak more. The choice of colors was also given mere concern to make the whole art articulate through colors and images. Although AmrutaPatil's works are preferable for more adult readers, yet her contribution is indeed a progressive change in the growth of Indian Graphic Novels.

## CONCLUSION

Nowadays, there are many novels which are edited and published with more vivid images in it and such kind of books are welcomed more among people especially who are beginners in reading. Hence Graphic Novels are highly demanding and would be a huge success if this genre is given focus and are produced more by authors. Indeed, AmrutaPatil has earned positive appraisal of her works by the readers not just for her story but for the articulation of the art that engaged people to the story.

## Suggestion for further study

- Implementation of Graphic Novels as an area of study in academics helps effective teaching and learning. It also supports and encourages people to read and improves visual literacy. Hence research can be carried out to analyze the effective learning through Graphic Novels.
- The important aspect of graphic narratives is it engages the readers with new layers of meaning and increases one's development of creative imagery in the mind. There is possibility of analyzing the images, colors and new meaning and interpretation of the story content in Graphic Novels.
- A Comparative study on popular Graphic Novels around the world and Indian Graphic Novels.

## REFERENCES

### Primary Source:

1. Patil, Amruta. Kari. Harper Collins, 2008.
2. Patil, Amruta. AdiParva: Churning of the Oceans. Harper Collins, 2012.
3. Patil, Amruta. Sauptik: Blood and Flowers. Harper Collins, 2016.
4. Patil, Amruta, Devdutt Pattanaik. Aranyka: Book of the Forest. Westland, 2019.

**Secondary source:**

1. Gravett, Paul. "The Indian Graphic Novel is here to say". British Council, 2015, <https://www.britishcouncil.org/voices-magazine/indian-graphic-novel-here-stay>. Accessed 17 August 2022.
2. Nayar, K. Pramod. *The Indian Graphic Novel: Nation, History and Critique*. Routledge, 2016.
3. Varma, Nandhini. *The Evolution of Graphic Novels in India*. Campus Diaries, 2014.