

BATTLE OF DRAUPADI

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Abstract

The present research paper focuses on the effect of the words that can cause damage to the image of a person and a destruction of the society. Draupadi: the misjudged heroine of an epic Mahabharata is a perfect blend of heart full of humanity and mind full of anger. Many of the characters in the epic Mahabharata are having immoralities, yet Draupadi is labelled as the cause of war. She is judged by the society as the root of all the evil and society passed an act that not to follow her path instead follow Sita, being an ideal wife and a dutiful woman. The epic appears as a tale of despair and destruction, every character suffers inside and people feel dejected for them except Draupadi, who is blamed for creating a world of widows and orphans. The question arises here: whether Draupadi alone is responsible for the destruction, the men flocks who disrobe a woman and destroyed her respect were not equally culprit. Although people believe that it was Draupadi's verbal actions that caused a great devastation, it is an hour's need to uncover her inner sufferings, and her unheard agony. The paper highlights the battle of Draupadi, whose identity is tarnished and whose virtues and ordeals were ignored.

Keywords: Misjudged heroine, cause of war, ordeals, tarnished identity, unheard agony

INTRODUCTION

In the book '*Mahabharata*' by Kisari Mohan Ganguli, he depicts the exact societal picture of Draupadi "the scripture prescribed one husband for a woman, Draupadi is dependent on many husbands, she can be designated as 'a prostitute'. Therefore, there is nothing improper in bringing her clothed or unclothed into the assembly' (*Mah.*, 2017, 35-36).

Draupadi has been always remaining a misjudged heroine, whose psychological trauma is ignored; her image is appeared as the ¹Kritya of a biggest war, which needs to be meliorate. The original epic *Mahabharata* that paints the courageous journey of Pandavas, and manipulation of Kauravas, but the psychosomatic journey of the marginalised women characters were overlooked. Many among them are remembered for their silent sacrificial attitude and blind follower of patriarchal system. On the other hand, mythology contains several aggressive femininity as well who take their own stand in a male chauvinistic world. Although they are dedicated partners, their aggressiveness put them into the category of rebellious figure. One of them is Panchali aka Draupadi, who is known as a first feminist of Indian mythology, who drew her own line, that being a woman, she is more than a ragdoll. She is a mystic warrior who breaks gender role.

Being a key character in the *Mahabharata*, Draupadi is also a significant figure in Indian culture. She has been depicted as the most argumentative woman who bears the greatest egocentric attitude, but her anguish has been given no place in history. She managed to represent regular women even though no lady in the world had experienced as much anguish and affliction. Most of the common mass remembered her for her 'sari episode', but none noticed the silence of elderly figures in the dice game. This silence might have implanted the seeds of annihilation of whole 'Kuru' clan, yet Draupadi was gifted with a tag. The level of humiliation she has undergone provoked her to break the shackle of patriarchy, to come out of the cocoon and took her own

¹Kritya means a reason

stand. It needs to be highlighted what is recorded about Draupadi and what is her felt desire, the reason behind people relate her with feminism.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- [1] To evaluate the character of Draupadi in light of feminism
- [2] To highlight her psychological battle
- [3] To break the misjudge image of Draupadi
- [4] To analyse her character as a strong willed woman who can relate with present day women.
- [5] She is a gift of a grab, who saves not only her husbands from slavery but also shows path to other
- [6] feminine figures.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mamgain, Kiran. & Kour, Simarnjyot. (2021). "Writing Otherness: Revisiting Unheard Women of Mythology in Selected Contemporary Narratives". The primary goal of this article is to reconsider mythology from the perspectives of unheard characters. By analysing a few works of Kavita Kane, this study shows how mythology connects to modern social issues including feminism, violence, and gender bias and insecurity based on looks and skin tone.

Dr. Vat, Kranti & Tantray, Imtiyaz Ahmed. (2016). "Status and sufferings in the life of Draupadi in Mahabharata": The present research paper focuses on Draupadi's position in life and the difficulties she has faced can be compared to a double-stranded life yarn in which emotions range from joy to existential anguish and from grief to unbearable insults. She was undoubtedly content with her roles as a queen, but men did not regard her with any respect. Lightning and thunder were two characteristics of her personality. She endured much shame and embarrassment, she handled it all with elegance, yet the humiliation which she has faced is no less than a death for a woman.

Dr. Mishra, Sabita. (2019). "Draupadi and 'Satitva': A Study of Pratibha Ray's novel Yajnaseni.": This critical paper sheds light on the social status of women that has been decided by her virginity and fidelity in light of the novel by Pratibha Ray. Through Draupadi Ray has critiqued a culture that determines a woman's chastity based on how many spouses she had. Ray has emphasized the point that chastity shouldn't be based on these kinds of social presumptions. As she rewrites Draupadi's "complexity," Ray adds the "elastic idea" by making the fabled figure more relatable to contemporary events, essentially highlighting her "satitva."

Mahabharata largely contains shadowy feminine characters, their inner voice and visibility was chiefly depending on their male counterpart. Draupadi denies following anyone's foot step, and avoided being a shadow of her five mighty husband, instead she created her identity in such a way that her all five husbands are known in the history by her name. Although a royal queen, she is humiliated, made to work as a maid, and exposed naked. There have been ups and downs throughout her life. Writer Alleyne Diesel stated in his research:

"Throughout her life Draupadi had to undergo humiliation, abuse and deprivation. Though unjustly treated and hence a very angry woman, Draupadi draws from her purity, gained over male intimidation and violence, and thus brought healing to communities. These "translate the ultimate viceroy of women's strength" (Diesel, 2002)

The prime corner of the saga is Draupadi who turns Panchali after being divided among five gods like husbands and that too without her consent, and this bitter reality of her married life becomes a history that everyone remembers about her. Despite being skilled, educated and intelligent, in most of the episodes of Mahabharata, her voice is hardly visible how she feels about her status of being wife of five.

*Draupadi has five husbands - but she has none,
She had five sons - and was never a mother,
The Pandavas have given Draupadi,
No joy, no sense of victory,
No honour as wife,*

*No respect as mother,
Only the status of a Queen. (Qtd. In Roy)*

Her story is a reflection of how men in society shape and define a woman's beauty and identity while also holding them accountable for her absurd behaviour. Her biggest adversary was her beauty, which was viewed by many as the fault that compelled all of the other characters in the Mahabharata to the Battle of Kurukshetra. Women's beauty is still held responsible for a variety of abhorrent behaviour in present day society.

Diesel again stated and compares her to Helen of Troy where she is "regarded by many men as a prize, valuable object to be competed for and squabbled over, and she becomes the central reason for internecine conflict, which brings disorder (adharma) and devastation to society" (Diesel, 2002)

She was an impatient queen. The most blasphemous incident of any woman's life is her sexual assault, Draupadi wasn't spared in her time, being a woman, 'Cheerharan' is the most heinous act of her life, for which she was remembered and blamed. Her education proved that she is not fatuous, and knows all the laws, she was confident that her elders would consider the rule she was referring to and come to her rescue. But regrettably, she was unaware that there were no legal protections for women and no special judicial laws. But her inquiries left everyone in awestruck. She claimed that no one could possibly imagine her misery and that every male in the assembly was impotent for disrespecting a woman during her menstruation and failing to take a stand for her honour.

Readers may find that although she is educated, skilful and full of humour, her words can pierce anyone by their heart. It was actually Draupadi's words that cause great destruction of her honour. She insulted Karna as a ²Sutputra during Swayamwara though she is secretly in love with him, she insulted Duryodhana calling him 'blind', all these verbal attack brought her horrible devastation, and people labelled her as an egoistic femininity, who could have asked for help from Karna during her cheerharan, however she didn't lower herself. From here Draupadi turns different from a normal womanish ideal, for her, her vengeance is greater than anything else in the world, no one can measure her soreness.

The view of the author of "Mahabharata" C. Rajagopalachari is worth mentioning here, "*Undoubtedly Draupadi faced the consequences of her own actions*" (Rajagopalachari, 2013) A menstruating lady, in a single garment, grabbed by her hair, what a humiliation! Every eyes in the assembly wanted to see her naked, none came forward to oppose this 'Adharma'.

Aarthi Ganesan, a researcher stated in her research that, "The humiliation, the pain and shaming that Draupadi has to undergo during her stay at in the marriage is beyond comprehension. The highlight of this unacceptable and atrocious treatment comes at a time when she is dragged to her court by her hair and disrobed. She was subject to horrific indignity, being ogled at while wearing a garment stained with her menstrual blood." (Ganesan, 2014).

This is where, she differs from Sita, and she cherished her womanhood. She frankly admits to the world that never expects the same kind of devotion like Sita from her. Instead she put all her efforts to prepare the Pandavas for retaliation. She kept the flame of revenge burning inside all of them so that she can put forth the example that no male can be spared who insults a woman. She sacrificed her comforts and yet she was labelled as an imperfect wife, and she proudly accepted that tag as well. She gave up her pleasure, follows Pandavas in their exile, even save them from being slave of Duryodhana when Dhritrashtra asked for forgiveness. Draupadi does not surrender as a wife; rather, as a woman.

"I am buoyant and expansive and uncontrollable – but I always was so, only I never knew it. I am beyond name and gender and the imprisoning patterns of ego. And yet, for the first time, I'm truly Panchali." (Divakaruni, 2009)

She would rather be the main subject than someone else's object. She destroys the myths about women and transforms into an outspoken, independent lady. Instead of destroying herself, she chooses to destroy the male patriarchy. She ends up being a tool for societal transformation.

² Low Caste person, whose father is a driver of royal chariot, works as a servant to royal kings.

Dr. Preeti Chaudhary in her research article submitted to Bhartiya Bhasha, Siksha, Sahitya Evam Shodh describes "*She has firm determination and unbending will, making her "proud and angry heroine of the epic Mahabharata who has remained an enigmatic woman of substance*" (Chaudhary, 2014).

Her only objection was; she was treated like an object or a property or a slave which gave her a reason to establish her identity as a strong woman. When her Palace was snatched along with her dignity, she was halfway dead, she couldn't forget the scenario where thousands vultures like thirsty eyes were eager to see her naked, they were not showing any remorse or not ready to protect her, but they were the part of that horrible act, which showed the seeds of great war.

"Karna calls Draupadi a whore, stating that the law only allows a woman to lie with four men and she married five men, [and] is to be treated without dignity, effectively as a piece of public property' (Pattnaik, 2010).

No one in the history blamed those dogs like kings who were the real culprit of the war; instead most of the common mass blamed Draupadi that it was due to her verbal attack on Karna and Duryodhana. Her verbal insult brought her physical insult, and there is no *Adharma* in that, according to male chauvinistic world. Her sexual harassment can be seen everywhere, even in today's time, is a remarkable chapter of every female's life.

She is branded as a conceited, vindictive, and irate woman, yet she is also a woman. A real gender strives towards social equality in acceptance. When she was born, she had no desire to make history, but her defeats throughout her life have turned her into a tough iron. Her conversion is so terrible and aggressive. She has set a milestone for women of all generation that stand up for yourself, question the injustice, fight for your honour and value your womanhood.

FINDINGS

For the most part, her life's story reveals the fact that women are merely bodies. Their existence is only recognized as that of a body devoid of any feelings, self-worth, or voice. She simply changed into a lifeless body as her subconscious mind screamed loudly to be heard especially after that cheerharan. She aspired to be valuable. She was made into an object, which caused her to develop into a commanding wife and possessive mother. Draupadi aka Panchali crafts her own path and refuses to make concessions in the name of gender at every point as a result of the severe public humiliation she endures. Her mind changes into a razor-sharp sensor that scans every event taking place around her.

History paints her as an aggressive, self-centered, egoistic woman but no one seems to notice that she never considered abandoning her five husbands, in fact, she even joined them into the forested exile, even after her public molestation, society and history blame her as the cause of the war. The claim that she is uncharacteristically close to Krishna damaged her reputation. Society has debated their connection throughout history. No matter how much inside suffering she was experiencing, neither of her spouses could relate. Arjuna didn't complain when Yudhishtira risked her in a dice match; when Kunti split her among five, Yudhishtira didn't offer any "Dharma" options; and none of the Pandavas challenged Kunti's choice, demonstrating that they all desired Panchali as their wife. She has no special status, and everyone makes fun of her for marrying five folks. Her way of life was described as a prostitute's. She was forced by Dharma to marry five individuals; it was not her decision to do so. She was regarded by society as a destroyer. She never receives recognition from society for her contribution to uniting the Pandavas. Her life serves as a reminder to society that it is important to recognize her for offering countless women a voice and for her staunch support of the Pandavas.

CONCLUSION

In the Mahabharata, Draupadi eclipsed the most of the male characters and eventually emerged to reveal her true self. As a result of her ability to survive the "Sari Episode," and establish a precedent for having a male best friend (Krishna), and blindly obey this male best friend more than her husbands, this dark-skinned heroine of the epic Mahabharata becomes the "Messiah" for other women of her time. She alone controls her destiny.

She employs her assault as therapy to aide in her recovery. She had a strong yearn for love, respect, and acceptance her entire life, but all she ever received was a guilty feeling. Her closest friend Krishna helped her overcome this shame by reassuring her that '*she was a part of a game, and she played her role perfectly.*' When she passed away, the readers breathed a heavy sigh of relief because she was no longer responsible for the world's worst war. She walked away serenely while still clutching Karna and Krishna's hands. Its crowning jewel, Draupadi, makes an impression of her imposing demeanor over the epic poem and the all-consuming conflict it vividly depicts, planting the first seeds of what we now refer to as feminism—a woman's battle for equality.

Referring to Dr. Vat and Tantray's literature analysis, which depicts Draupadi's agony, it is evident that throughout her life, she yearned intensely for love, honour, and acceptance, yet all she received in return was a guilty feeling. She was treated like gambling property, a cattle, or a slave. Everyone wanted war for one or the other reasons, including Draupada, Shikhandi, Shakuni, Kaurava, Dhritrashtra, and even the Pandavas, but Draupadi was pointed out since everyone had a secret desire whereas she made a public pledge. When she was born, she had no desire to make history, but her defeats throughout her life have turned her into a harsh iron. Her conversion is so terrible and aggressive.

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