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## Research Article

# POLITICAL REPRESENTATION OF LITERATURE AND WOMEN APPREHENDED IN SOCIETY: INSURGENT VOICE OF *DRAUPADI*

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### ABSTRACT

Draupadi established form of women from the great Indian classic Mahabharata has got its significance narratives and characterization of a women lead by five warriors of called Pandus and the story of Draupadi of ancient oppressive male chauvinist society has been transformed into a new shape, but not much different, by Mahasweta Devi. Since then Draupadi has found a place of strong incarnation in the contemporary world of dominance to react and counterattack on the rigid values of deep rooted male authorized society of India. Mahasweta Devi needs no introduction but her influence over the society through her writing and socio-political actives drawn a major impact noting her literary works like *Hajar Churashir Maa*, *Rudaali*, *Jhansir Rani*, *Old Woman*, *The Breast Stories*, *Aranyer Adhikar* and list goes on to hinder upon the existing status of women. Devi's breath left her mortal body minus life in July 2016 which is marked as coming end of an era of resistance and presentation of every corner of the lives around; but most specifically out of her innumerable works, Draupadi made her absence felt when a play was staged in a department of English in centrally funded university in north of India in the milieu of tension prevails on the border with neighbor country. The fact is many of the Devi's works has been adapted on big and small screens like *Sunghursh*, *Rudaali*, *Hazaar Chaurasi Ki Maa*, *Ullas* and may more but this issue of stage adaptation of *Draupadi*, short story, has turned into storm for the people who staged the play. This paper tries to locate the differences between imagined realities in literature of the society and the real consciousness of male centered domain towards the perception of human lives associated with women.

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### INTRODUCTION

The narratives characterized in the plot of *Draupadi* certainly goes back to identify the social insurgence of ancient epics of Mahabharata where Draupadi a wife of five men was not considered a human being at all instead a thing or object which was shared by five brothers may be called by mistake or the destiny scripted in the Indian epic, so to say nothing has much changed from the ideological behavior of a class From that period of time to 20<sup>th</sup> century and now in 21<sup>st</sup> century. The story Draupadi is retold by Mahasweta Devi in her work depicting the character of Dopdi projecting her as strong as she could have, who "spread her arms, raises her face to the sky, turns towards the forest, and ululates with the force of her entire being. Once, twice, three times. At the third burst the birds in the trees at the outskirts of the forest awake and flap their wings. The echo of the call travels far" but along with her character also goes through the agony being discriminated twice from caste and gender which is recognized as part of

tribal ethnicity who experiences the conscious of being cut from the mainstream societies with inequalities. The plot provides the account a delineated group of people called enemy of the government and are to be integrated in the development of the country irrespective of the existence in dominating politics, ethnic oppression, material violence, inhuman torture in the so called modern era of development. The discourse around has been quite well decorated for those of the tribal becoming more violent and aggressive towards the forces deployed by the government which is of course considered for the welfare of the uneducated and uncivilized sect of humanity; refers the memories backwards when colonial power implied on India for transforming us into a civilized community. The plot revolves around the lives of Dulna and Dopdi and gradually sequences turns into battles between couple and force to dismantles the unit stands against the political system; but not going into much of details of the story and focusing on the character elaborated in telling of the story and its relevance in present scenario. Dopdi broadened herself with strong enough

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personality like goddess of Kali who slaughters the evil with her terrifying image; similarly Dopdi after realizing that her husband is dead, leads the cops towards burning ghat to avoid apprehended. But, when Dopdi is apprehended and Senanayak's order after dinner permits cops to "Make her. Do the needful" before he leaves for the night made the world upside down for Dopdi who is being brutally raped as Devi writes, "Then a billion moons pass. A billion lunar years. Opening her eyes after a million light years, Draupadi, strangely enough, sees sky and moon. Slowly the bloodied nail heads shift from her brain. Trying to move, she feels her arms and legs still tied to four posts. Something sticky under her ass and waist. Her own blood. Only the gag has been removed. Incredible thirst. In case she says 'water' she catches her lower lip in her teeth. She senses that her vagina is bleeding. How many came to make her?" The integration of the self respects of being a human is snatch away from hegemonic control of power over the weaker; Devi captures the notion of male authority over the body of woman but not over the inner strength she possesses while she counters the dominance and embraces the role of extreme liberty beyond the lunar flux and sexuality and takes a place where she will finally act *for* herself in *not* 'acting', in challenging the man to (en)counter her as unrecorded or misrecorded objective historical monument. The army officer is shown as unable to ask the authoritative ontological question, "what is this"? As it goes like,

"The commotion is as if the alarm had sounded in a prison. Senanayak walks out surprised and sees Draupadi, naked, walking towards him in the bright sunlight with her head high. The nervous guards trail behind.

What is this? He is about to cry, but stops. Draupadi stands before him, naked. Thigh and pubic hair matted with dry blood. Two breasts, two wounds. What is this? He is about to bark.

Draupadi comes closer. Stands with her hand on her hip, laughs and says, the object of your search, Dopdi Mejhén. You asked them to make me up, don't you want to see how they made me?"

Thus, Mahasweta Devi's story *Draupadi* like her other stories associates with culture and socio-political circumstances of tribals in Bengal. Dopdi Mejhén as her name appears in dialect, is a rebel, hunted down by the government in their attempt to subjugate these groups. The government uses all forces available to them, including kidnapping, murder, and rape, and any tribal deaths in custody are invariably 'accidents'. But Dopdi is not easily cowed. After continuous days of rape and abuse, deprived of food and water, the story ends with a magnificent final scene in which she faces her abusers, naked and bleeding, but fiercely strong. When she comes closer to army officer undressed and striped with an "indomitable laughter that Senanayak simply cannot understand" that makes her stronger resisting for the sexual torture and her unafraid voice that "is terrifying, sky splitting and as her ululation" uttering the most inevitable statement over powering the army office, "what's the use of clothes? You can strip me, but how can you clothe me again? Are you a man?" that defines self-empowered of such kind from the experience of humiliation and against the oppression of POWER.

The stories of victimization in public or in private are increasing in high number every as be it Nirbhya incident in Delhi five years back or every day rape or gang rape incidents around corner or Bangloru M.G. road public molestation or any other incident for that matter doesn't seem to end; in such atmosphere there was this incident of staging a play on based on *Draupadi* shake the country by storm by dragging the Indian army in scene and creating the matter more popular relating the recent attacks on the Indian Army; the issue of discussion is whether literature is to represent the social issue of significance such as dalit and tribal oppression, rape, molestation and humiliation of girls at public places and at workplaces, marital rape, dowry murder, owner killing, child abuse and many others or literature is there to please the government in power ignoring several worst situations to intend to. It is true that Devi's story is set not in pretext of contemporary circumstances of neighboring country attacking on army men and brave cops of army fighting back for the soil of mother India, rather the situation for that Manipuri iron lady Irom Chanu Sharmila struggled for years together for removal of Indian force act which restricts the liberty, freedom of speech, choice and life on just a single point suspension, life in danger. The protest against the department before Sahitya Academy office in Delhi signifies multiple layers of production and reception of aesthetics, literature and art. Let's consider the ideal situation of the state from where a political group went to protest taking all girls and women are safe and sound at home not entitled to a violence; presenting a play in which retelling of inhuman action of a group of people be it some official or a common civilian but the act of demolishing dignity of women should not be praised and protected by better informed people of any society. There are several victims like Dopdi in our near society who are not bold enough to counter the dominance and end the inequality rather they choose to end their by committing suicide; the trauma of rape, humiliation and molestation leads one's life in mental disturbance for the whole life and instead of contenting such inhuman behaviors we are in a way supporting those elements to get motivation and promote them to repeat. What is wrong with Draupadi's reaction to Senanayak when she repeatedly raped and left no less than a bagged of skin; or is it again testimonial of this society not to raise head high and fight against oppression in the form so called social values; taking about social values male oriented ideologies have the reasoning, time and energy against to judge where the line of control for women and do a protest if the reality of the society is exposed but would keep mum when degraded deeds of their kinship opens up nobody dares to demonstrate. Therefore, this dual face politics on the literature and poor mind of reception to understand where is to draw a line between political gains and aesthetic pleasure for art and literature.

The hypocrisy assimilated in dual behavior in character of the male chauvinist society they have no issue or complain when there is a scene of degradation of women in public as Draupadi is being striped and gang raped immensely; her disrobing of cloths and naked body and bleeding organs did not attract anybody's reaction to stand alongside of lots of women who have been helpless and are survivor of rape and prostitution at different stages of real world, texts and in films. Another case of sedition on same incident took place in the year 2000 in Manipur when a celebrated thespian Kanhaiya Lal acted the

same story on the stage. The role's were acted with high sensitivity by Padmashree Sabitri Heisnam, and Kanhaiya Lal's wife with same plot line depicting the final scene with equally anger against the army official stripped off clothes, undress body challenging the manly potentiality of cops/officers to dress a women again that indicates that it is very easy to violate the dignity of girl or women but to reverse the situation is next to impossible as Dopdi says "You can strip me, but how can you clothe me again? Are you a man?" This incident of Manipur too broke out and went to the extent that people terms the reputed actor Heisnam as 'whore'. I affirm the positive side of the plays and literature; and my arguments is to question the society in which we are not free to breath, think and write, and discuss the dark side of our society; the episode like in Manipur Indian Army headquarters a woman one Thangjam Manorama was abducted by the forces, raped and finally killed brutally and later twelve *Imas* were protested before headquarter stripped themselves naked. Therefore, every matter of representation of literature that hurts the ego of male superiority cannot be called case sedition of anti-national and if at all government has to interfere and restrict the sky of imagination then why should be there democracy, let it be autocracy. I would conclude with a news paper content which goes as "the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), along with some ex servicemen and locals staged a protest at the University, stating that the play portrayed army men in poor light and hence is anti-national. Police complaints have also been filed against students and teachers involved in the production, asking they be booked under sedition charges."

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