



INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
INDIA

2395-2636 (Print);2321-3108 (online)

PANCHALI- THE TALE OF THE MODERN WOMAN: FROM UNWANTED TO THE DESIRED ONE

Dr. RASHI SAXENA

Assistant Professor, KNMIET, Modinager.

Email: rashihec@gmail.com

<https://doi.org/10.33329/rjelal.7119.370>



Dr. RASHI SAXENA

ABSTRACT

According to the idealistic approach of Indian culture, the woman has been rewarded by a holy and respected position but in practical Indian society often seems fail to provide justice to its woman. This is the reason that time to time a retrospection of the woman's conditions is must. The present chapter is an effort to introspect a common woman of modern society. This woman by traits resembles the heroine of 'Illusion of Palace' who has been depicted through the character of Draupadi sketched by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. By the virtue of birth, she is a princess yet she has to bear all such pains which a common woman has to deal with. In fact, Draupadi, who is the gift of God along with controversial traits of that time woman, reflects the modern woman. In other words, she is the message for the coming generation and that is why she can be easily compared with the woman of the modern era. She reflects fire in her personality. She can struggle and can challenge too. She deserves and she demands respect, honor, and love. She is unwanted by birth yet she is proved to be desired one. She is not only a sacrifice loving creature but revenger too. At last this comparison comes to the conclusion that for Panchaali as well as for modern woman 'thing' word is appropriate for she is handled as a thing, her role is decided by others, not by her own will. Despite their unwanted presence, the fulfillment of their duties in all the role(either of daughter, mother, sister, wife, etc) played by them makes them desired

Key Words: fire, unwanted, contemporary, struggle

This is an open secret of our society that although we need a woman yet we don't prefer any woman. In many positions, women are working, leading, and they are doing many remarkable things but still, they are not welcome in their own families however they are needed. Such fact Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni has noticed in Panchaali's story too. That is the reason that her novel The Palace of Illusions depicts dissatisfaction of Draupadi. As it is known that Draupadi was a princess; a member of the royal family but she has to spend her most of the life in

poverty. She was forced to marry five men, though she was in love with another man.

The present article is an effort to introspect of a common woman of modern society who depicts through the character of Draupadi sketched by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. Basically, she is a princess yet she belongs all such pain which a common woman has to deal with in daily life. Draupadi is a mythical character who is a byproduct of fire. Her color reflects her genital trait as she is blue. Her mismatch leads her in some different

category. She is unwanted. The pain of being unwanted ever pins her inner in solitude. Draupdi represents all stigmas which a lady has to bear while living in a civilization. From ancient time women are supposed to be like an axis on which all traditions, culture, and values are based. To maintain that desired balance, she has to sacrifice her identity, her choices as well as her dreams, even her self-respect too. One so-called fault of her can plot a Mahabharat. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's 2008 novel, *The Palace of Illusions*, reframes the epic Sanskrit poem, *The Mahabharata*. Consisting of some 100,000 couplets and a myriad of myths, *The Palace of Illusions* explores the themes of pride and revenge as they factor into Panchaali's fulfillment of her prophesied fate. The is factual that many girls are not welcomed when they are born. At their birth the social factors as like social dilemmas, like sense about any goodness behind their birth, social problems like dowry, safety, expenses and many more negative thoughts strike the mind of her parents. Social eagerness for a son can be traced out by following a description of King Draupad's prayers described by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni;

"We'd been praying for thirty days, from sun-up to sundown. All of us: your father, the hundred priests he'd invited to Kampilya to perform the fire ceremony, headed by that shifty-eyed pair, Yaja and Upayaja, the queens, the ministers, and of course the servants. We'd been fasting, too—not that we were given a choice—just one meal, each evening, of flattened rice soaked in milk. King Drupad wouldn't eat even that. He only drank water carried up from the holy Ganga, so that the gods would feel obligated to answer his prayers."

In a modern era, although many parents have the craze for a baby girl, yet still, in many places especially in remote areas those unconditional emotions for a girl child got disappeared. Nature furnished girls with all her ardent gesture of love and in the result, she creates an exquisite creature. But physically weaker than a man, she has to face many malpractices of her society. All such factors make her undesirable. This unwantedness reminds us of Draupadi, who was born but not welcomed. As Draupadi memorizes her Dhai Ma and recalls her statement:

She said, "When your brother stepped out of the sacrificial fire onto the cold stone slabs of the palace hall, all the assembly cried out in amazement." "An eyeblink later," she continued, "when you emerged from the fire, our jaws dropped. It was so quiet; you could have heard a housefly fart."

The story of her birth evoked her curiosity about her identity. As she was named on her father's name but it was not so proud of her as she wishes a significant name as her identity. She wishes for her a better name, a meaningful name rather than her father's name for her identity. As she thinks:

The story inspired me to make up fancy names for myself: Offspring of Vengeance, or the Unexpected One. But Dhai Ma puffed out her cheeks at my tendency to drama, calling me the Girl Who Wasn't Invited. Who knows, perhaps she was more accurate than I.

Similarly, she feels some different approach regarding her upbringing. As she was a princess and she was bring up by according to the level of parents yet she feels the primary offspring of her parent was her brother. She loves her brother and has no competition with him; however, the pain of being unwanted teased her always. She acknowledges:

I didn't forget that hesitation, even though in the years that followed King Drupad was careful to fulfill his fatherly duty and provide me with everything he believed a princess should have. Sometimes, when I pressed him, he even allowed me privileges he kept from his other daughters. In his own harsh and obsessive way, he was generous, maybe even indulgent. But I couldn't forgive him that initial rejection. Perhaps that was why, as I grew from a girl into a young woman, I didn't trust him completely.

Through above passage her pain of being unwelcomed is clear. She could notice that there is no one to welcome her. Draupadi was born from a fire ritual, and she was unwanted and unasked. The

god gifted sensitivity stop her satisfaction. The female members of this modern era, up to some instinct feel the same notions. Many families focus on son's career rather than daughters. The fact that one day girls would have to leave the home, always has been remind them and most of the decisions generally reflected this same point. In general, education firstly matters for the boy and then for girls. In the present novel this fact is realized by Draupdi often refers as feminine with masculinities traits. She is bold enough to face new challenges. She never limits herself in the predefined boundaries. She wants to discover new dimensions. She believes in the overlapping of so-called social stigmas. Her beauty was equated with that of a goddess. She was for many years recognize for being only by her looks, while her brother, who was born of the same fire, was taught the arts of war and statesmanship. But she took every opportunity she could to learn the arts, master politics, and comprehend books beyond her years. Day by day she not only emerged just as a pretty face but was renowned for qualities too. Same thing many of today's women can identify with. New women of the modern era also reflect the same. Her masculine approach to life and society marks her challenging attitude. Her deny for traditional lifestyle proves her tendency to be counted as a human being rather than any particular genetic reorganization of so-called society. She travels alone, she rides, she wears new styles; she is cool with jeans and paints above all she likes to handle family as the head. These are common traits of a new woman which are similar to ancient Draupadi.

As per the novel by Chitra D Banerji, her Draupdi represents a controversial character, who roots Mahabharata, an epic war which destroys as well as create a huge part of history. Her proud, her elegance, her royal hood (even in poverty) upholds her strength and motivates others. She has her own dreams and desires.

Staring down from my rooms at the bare compound stretching below, I'd feel dejection settle on my shoulders like a shawl of iron. When I had my own palace, I promised myself, it would be totally different. I closed my eyes and imagined a riot of color and sound, birds singing in mango and custard

apple orchards, butterflies flitting among jasmynes, and in the midst of it—but I could not imagine yet the shape that my future home would take. Would it be as elegant as crystal? Solidly precious, like a jewel-studded goblet? Delicate and intricate, like gold filigree? I only knew that it would mirror my deepest being. There I would finally be at home. She has the power to fulfill her dreams yet her sincere efforts to become social being led every dream incomplete. Her sacrifices are not countable and future demands much more from her. To choose a husband out of her own choice, above all, to accept five men as her husband, is her prime exam. Really for a normal woman of that time it was one of the big exam, however nowadays when a woman is somewhat free it is quite normal to have emotions attached with more than one man. Nowadays social life is changed, man woman has to work together, the co-educational system is decreasing that social gap which up to some instinct leads to the closeness of opposite sex. However, society still focused on solo partner and some orthodox factors that is why love marriage is a dream condition for a girl. After having an affair, to marry with other one brings a modern girl equal to Draupadi.

The attitude, the lifestyle of a modern girl reflects that pride and aggressive tone which once Draupdi reflected. Still, their ability, boldness, and challenging nature brings own arena and that so-called undesired-one convert into desire-one. Like Panchali many of Indian women are sustaining in society, their presence is not welcomed yet they up brought by their families. In spite of many drawbacks, they struggle to be welcome in their own dome. They tried to prove themselves as a useful creature. However, there is no prophecy for them yet they have to prove useful for this society. They have to cultivate their qualities, train their appearance and finally become the desired one as Draupadi. This is a fact that without Draupdi we can't assume Mahabharat, a grand war for justice. In the same way, the modern woman is able to place her presence in the future world. According to reviews, Divakaruni portrays Panchali as a powerful, strong, and independent woman, an equal to the men around her rather than subservient. She

presents Panchali's life as a series of choices made by Panchali, and not the people around her, giving her a voice in the overwhelmingly patriarchal society that was ancient India. Divakaruni's interpretation of the epic provides a complete narrative, sometimes missing from the original epic, giving a stronger role to the women of the story, and portraying them as equals in society.

Like an ordinary woman she is soft hearted and peace lover. In the chapter titled 'cosmology', Draupadi ponders about war and declares she would teach the men in her life to searching for other ways to glory because the war wasn't necessary. She implies here that war is a man's way to approach glory/ victory and a woman wouldn't think that way. But the moment she feels humiliated in Duryodhan's court, it's her blood lust that comes fore. The same attitude modern woman prefers a person who disrespects woman by malpractice of strength and power. Readers can notice modern woman under the shed of Draupadi who is a bold and strong character from the history of ancient India. Here it is right to acknowledge the fact explored by Nancy Yadav that Divakaruni's treatment of Draupadi as a subject takes us back to the mythological understanding, yet it builds our contemporary understanding of the feminine matters through the novel". Beyond it one common factor between Draupadi and modern woman is their utilization by society is as a thing, they are never asked for their wishes yet both of them tend others to accept them as a mandatory part of life.

References

1. <http://www.chitradivakaruni.com/books/#/books/palace-of-illusions/>
2. https://books.google.co.in/books?id=W0wLgfQyvFAC&pg=PA150&dq=palace+of+illusions&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwj_p6MtljgAhVGX30KHS2iAysQ6AEIMzAC#v=onepage&q=palace
3. <http://www.alterinter.org/spip.php?article4058>
4. <https://feministwords.wordpress.com/2013/06/22/palace-of-illusions/>
5. www.academia.edu/8262623/CHITRA_BANE_RJEE_DIVAKARUNI_S_THE_PALACE_OF_ILLUSIONS_A_Feminist_reading_of_The_Mahabharata

6. <https://feminisminindia.com/2017/02/15/exploring-draupadi-feminist-lens/>
7. Yadav, Nancy. "Quest for Feminine Identity in *The Palace of Illusions*". *Indian Muse* 62(2015). Web. 23 June 2016.