

Suppression of Women Portrayed in Chitra Banerjee's *The Palace of Illusion*

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An Abstract

This research paper deals with Hindu Mythology character Draupadi. An Indian Hindu Mythology originated from agonizing a woman character. Mythologies were written thousands of years ago. During that time there was no space for the women. Male writers projected women characters in a very low manner. After modernism and revolution of feminism, all the women characters and women writers got their unique position in modern writings. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Palace of Illusion* deals with the significant feminine perspective of Draupadi which mirrors the suffering mute women in the Indian male society. This paper concludes that Indian mythology shows women characters in lower status.

Keywords: Divakaruni, *Palace of Illusion*, Indian Literature, Hindu Mythology, Male society, Feminism, Modernism, Revolution.

Indian women are projected in the suppressed position. That is the theme of this article. This paper deals with the iconic Indian mythical woman character Draupadi. Here Draupadi is not only a character from literature but she is a symbol of woman's status from the classical age to modern age, during which women are treated in the same manner. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni presents her own Mahabharata from the perception of Draupadi. Here the character of Draupadi is ill-treated by all the male characters of Mahabharata. It is not only about Draupadi but also about all Indian women. "MANUSMRTI" says, "women should follow back to men".

The most of Indian people and people from other countries get inspired by the Mahabharata epic. *The Palace of Illusion* deals with Mahabharata's lead woman character Draupadi. She is the pride of women in society. In modern times most women suffered from male domination. But when they read the Draupadi character, after women will fight for their rights. In *Palace of Illusion* Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni says about the Indian mythological character "Draupadi" as princess of king Drupada. She was born in Kshatriya family, but she faced a lot of struggles in her life.

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First Draupadi is projected as if she was made for maintaining peace throughout the world. Later she was displayed as a cause for war and shown as if she was the cause of Sin and Death.

The story starts with Panchaali (better known as Draupadi), a princess born from the fire. Her brother Dhrishtadyumna was also born from the fire. King Drupada was humiliated by Drona's students Pandavas. So he wants to take revenge of Drona. King Drupada didn't have a male child, so he set the fire and from the fire first Draupadi was born in the world. But King Drupada's mindset was that he wanted only male child. So King Drupada did not like her. He did not speak to her because she was a unwanted child. After a few minutes, her brothers were also born from the fire. Draupadi deeply loved her father Drupada. Her sufferings started from her birth itself. After Drupada planned to take revenge on Drona again. But Krishna arrived in Drupada kingdom. As a single man Krishna fought against Drupada's whole army. Krishna defeated the king Drupada's army. Krishna planned to kill king Drupada but Draupadi wanted to save her father. After that only Drupada understood Draupadi's true love. King Drupada planned a swayavaram for his daughter Draupadi. In this swayavaram Arjuna got married to her. During that swayavaram Pandavas disguised Arjuna as a saint married to Draupadi. Arjuna brought his wife to his mother. Unfortunately she was married to the remaining four brothers of Arjuna as well. Thus she married Pandavas. Each year she lived with one husband and rotated again. The news spread and she felt humiliated and people started talking about Draupadi in a very bad manner.

After Pandavas returned to Hastinapur. Bhishma decided to divide the kingdom. Bhishma delivered news to Dhritarastra. Finally the kingdom was divided. Half of the kingdom belonged to Kauravas and the other half of the kingdom belonged to the Five Pandavas. Five Pandavas named the kingdom as Indraprasatham. The Indraprasatham was full of illusion structures. Pandavas was inviting kings including Kauravas to visit their new country Indraprasatham. In the invitation ceremony Sushebalan was killed by Krishna. Dhuryodhan was angry at Krishna and he left the place. But the the Palace was full of Illusion. Dhryodhan was facing very embracing movement in front of all maid servants. They all showed ridiculous and kind of humiliating smile, including Draupadi also to Duryodhan. He fell into a water. Dhryodhan wanted to take revenge against Pandavas, particularly Draupadi. One day Dhryodhan invited Pandavas to Hastinapur. Pandavas visited Hastinapur once again. Dhryodhan wanted to play gambling with Yudhishtra. Yudhishtra also played gambling. But Yudhishtra lost his four brothers and Indraprasatham. Finally he lost also Draupadi. Dhryodhan's aim was to humiliate

Draupadi. Draupadi was humiliated in front of Rajasabha and that humiliation caused very much pain to Draupadi. After Yudhishtra lost game, they became slaves of Dhuryodhan. Here Draupadi also became a slave of Dhuryodhan. So, Dhuryodhan started humiliating Draupadi. Dhuryodhan ordered Dushasana to get back Draupadi in Rajasabha. Dushasana got Draupadi back but she was fighting with Dushasana. Dushasana was also fighting with Draupadi but he treated her in a bad manner. Dushasana removed all the jewels of Draupadi and threw them away. Finally he got back into Rajasabha. Draupadi only stood as a woman in the Hastinapur Rajasabha. In Hastinapur Rajasabha there were some powerful characters. But Dhuryodhan was so adamant that he only aimed at humiliating Draupadi. Karna also spoke bad about Draupadi. Dhuryodhan ordered Dushasana to remove Draupadi's saree in Hastinapur Rajasabha. She trusted her friend Krishna. He saved her respect. But her face was full of blood more than two hundred percent. She was humiliated by Duryodhan. After that Gandhari came in Rajasabha. She advised Draupadi not to scold any one. But she angrily asked to Gandhari to erase all the humiliation she faced. But Gandhari did not give the promise to Draupadi and also she did not erase her life. The war began. Bhima killed hundred karuvas especially Dhuryodhan and Dushasana and their true friend Karna was also killed by own brother Arjun. The story thus ends but Draupadi faced so many suppression and humiliation in her whole life. She did not ever forget the Hastinapur Rajasabha removal of her saree scene. Thousands of years ago she suffered in the male dominated world.

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Work Cited

1. www.supersummery.com: [The Palace of Illusion summary & study guide.](#)