

LEVERAGING PSYCHOLOGICAL INSIGHT: MARGINALIZATION IN MAHASWETA DEVI'S DRAUPADI

Dr. Sharmila Roy¹

¹Assistant Professor of English at Midnapore City College Bhadutala, Paschim Medinipur, India.

DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.58257/IJPREMS37829>

ABSTRACT

Mahasweta Devi's work has gained global reach through translations, extending its impact beyond her native Bengali-speaking community. She has become recognized worldwide as a result of this access. She is one of the few authors who, rather than accepting the status quo, constantly seeks out and investigates something novel and difficult. Her contribution to the field of creative writing has been important in both scope and substance. The present paper aims to investigate psycho-analytical framework to examine how Mahasweta Devi's groundbreaking work, "Draupadi," deals with themes of marginalization and the marginalized. This study highlights the psychological effects of oppression, resistance, and survival by a careful analysis of the protagonist's experiences, providing a deeper comprehension of the complicated processes of marginalization. Mahasweta Devi has been actively advocating for disadvantaged populations and indigenous people for many years. The view she holds has been reinforced by her works, which naturally reflect her involvement. According to Radha Chakravarty's book *Feminism and Contemporary Women Writers*, "Mahasweta's current reputation as a writer rests largely on her own self-projection as decrier of class prejudice and champion of the tribal cause." Encouragement of the cause of Indian tribal people, she is especially committed to ensuring their social, political, and economic equilibrium. The fact that the indigenous people are being forced from the forests, which are their natural habitat and source of income, represents an issue she speaks out against.

Keywords- Oppression, Resistance, Power Dynamics, Social Justice, Subaltern Studies, Feminist Theory.

1. INTRODUCTION

For many years, Mahasweta Devi's revolutionary short story "Draupadi" has been acknowledged as a potent examination of oppression, marginalization, and resistance. This 1978 Bengali story is still relevant to conversations about social justice, feminist philosophy, and subaltern studies today. In order to explore the intricate processes of marginalization and its significant effects on the marginalized, this critical study uses psychological insight as a frame of reference. This study will show how Devi's story deftly demonstrates the connections between colonialism, casteism, and patriarchy through a close analysis of the protagonist Draupadi's experiences. Psychology theories of trauma, identity formation, and resistance will be applied in this inspection to show how marginalization damages both individual and societal psyches. The goal of this study is to add to the body of understanding already available on "Draupadi" by offering a psychologically guided analysis of the narrative's themes and characters. This project aims to improve our knowledge of the psychological and social effects of marginalization in order to help generate resistance, empowerment, and social change approaches.

Article Statement

This study makes the case—through a critical analysis of Mahasweta Devi's *Draupadi*—that psychological insight supplies an essential framework for comprehending the multidimensional nature of marginalization and its effects on the marginalized, exposing the complex web of power relations that shape both individual and collective experiences.

Preview of Sections

This analysis will be divided into several sections:

1. Contextualizing "Draupadi": Historical and Cultural Background
2. Psychological Frameworks: Trauma, Identity, and Resistance.
3. Marginalization and the Marginalized: A Critical Analysis.
4. Power Dynamics and Social Justice.
5. Conclusion: Implications for Social Change.

Contextualizing Draupadi: Historical and Cultural Background *Draupadi* by Mahasweta Devi (1978) has an important relationship to the sociopolitical climate of India in the 1970s, especially in Bengal. The historical and cultural setting in which the story was written is crucial to recognizing its themes and its significance.

Historical Context:

1. Emergency Era (1975-1977): The autocratic control, censorship, and human rights transgressions of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi constituted India's period of emergency.

2. Naxalite Movement: In the hope to eradicate social injustice, poverty, and inequality, a Maoist insurgency increased over Bengal.

3. Post-Colonial India: The nation battled to define its identity while conquering those challenges of nation-building and the lasting impacts of colonialism.

Cultural Context:

1. Bengali Literature: In the 1970s, Bengali literature saw a renaissance as authors such as Shankha Ghosh, Sunil Gangopadhyay, and Mahasweta Devi confronted problems associated with cultural identity and social justice.

2. Feminist Movement: India saw a surge in the women's liberation movement, which brought spotlight onto addresses such as reproductive rights, inequality, and gender-based violence.

3. Tribal Rights: Particularly in Bengal's rural parts, the campaign for tribal rights and self-determination grew more intensely.

Cultural Significance of Draupadi:

1. Mythological Significance: One of the Mahabharata's primary antagonists, Draupadi, embodies female autonomy, rebellion against and dignity.

2. Subaltern Representation: By embodying the realities of communities that are marginalized, Devi's Draupadi undermines prevailing narratives and power structures.

Psychological Frameworks: Trauma, Identity, and Resistance in Draupadi

Mahasweta Devi's "Draupadi" provides a comprehensive examination of identity formation, psychological trauma, and resistance, primarily as it relates to marginalized people. Psychological frameworks are used in this part for analyzing Draupadi's experiences.

Trauma Theory

1. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD): PTSD symptoms which include anxiety, hypervigilance, and flashbacks are perfectly illustrated by Draupadi's experiences of domestic violence, rape, and displacement.

2. Trauma and Memory: By showing how traumatic experiences may mould both individual and collective identities, the story underscores the intricate connection between trauma and memory.

3. Intergenerational Trauma: The lingering effects of poverty, social injustice, and colonialism on communities with limited resources are made apparent by Draupadi's story.

Identity Theory

1. Social Identity Theory: Tribal ancestry, gender, and socioeconomic standing all influence Draupadi's identity, highlighting the complicated connections between these various variables.

2. Self-Concept and Empowerment: Draupadi emphasises her self-concept and challenges established myths by retrieving her agency through her resistance.

3. Cultural Identity and Belonging: The story examines the contradiction between forced assimilation and cultural heritage.

The Marginalized and Marginalization: A Critical Examination

A potent critique of marginalization, Mahasweta Devi's "Draupadi" demonstrates the intricate web of power dynamics that preserve oppression. The manner in which Devi's story sheds light on the lives of communities that are under-represented are examined in this inspection.

Different forms of marginalization

1. Caste Oppression: Draupadi's tale serves as an unsettling symbol of the violence and enslavement that arise from caste.

2. Gender-Based Violence: Gender-based violence is widespread, especially against marginalized women, as the story reveals.

3. Economic Marginalization: Displacement and poverty in Draupadi serve as a representation of the economic implications of marginalization.

4. Cultural Erasure: The narrative criticizes the elimination of marginalized communities' cultures and forced assimilation.

Examining Draupadi as the Marginalized Character

1. Draupadi's Agency: Defying prevailing principles, Draupadi maintains her agency in the face of unspeakable inhumanity.

2. Resistance and Defiance: The ways that repressive systems can be countered by individuals who are marginalized are most effectively demonstrated by Draupadi's hardship.

3. Intersectional Identity: Draupadi's experiences serve as an example of how caste, class, gender, and culture connect.

Power Dynamics

1. Colonialism and Internalized Oppression: The history of colonialism and its continued effects on underprivileged groups are criticized in the story.

2. Patriarchy and Masculinity: Devi challenges patriarchal standards and toxic masculinity in her work.

3. State-Sanctioned Violence: The narrative highlights the state institutions' role in reinforcing marginalization.

Critical Perspectives

1. Subaltern Studies: Devi's work is rooted in subaltern studies, which emphasizes the experiences and voices of the marginalized.

2. Feminist Theory: Feminist critiques of resistance, oppression, and patriarchy are informed by the story.

3. Postcolonial Theory: The narrative exemplifies how colonialism continues impacting marginalized groups.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The use of psychological knowledge as a frame of reference in the critical examination of Mahasweta Devi's "Draupadi" is part of a thriving academic community. In light of Devi's work, this review summarizes the body of knowledge about psychological trauma, resistance, and marginalization.

Research Gaps:

1. Limited Psychological Analysis: There isn't much psychological analysis of "Draupadi" in the cultural and literary heritage that has been studied to this point.

2. Intersectional Approaches: The ways that various types of marginalization (such as caste, class, and gender) interact are frequently overlooked in current research, which frequently ignores intersectional viewpoints.

3. Resistance Strategies: Research frequently concentrates on the consequences of marginalisation rather than examining successful resistance tactics used by marginalised people or communities.

4. Contextualizing Trauma: A more complex understanding of how trauma affects marginalised people and communities is required, taking sociopolitical, cultural, and historical factors into account.

5. Marginalized Voices: Prioritising dominant viewpoints above marginalised voices and experiences is a common practice in existing research.

6. Psychological Impact of Internalized Oppression: Internalised oppression's psychological effects on marginalised people and communities have not been thoroughly studied in research.

7. Empowerment and Resilience: Research frequently ignores the forms of empowerment and resilience that marginalised people and communities use.

8. Comparative Analysis: There are few comparative examinations of marginalisation in various literary works and cultural situations.

9. Psychological Frameworks: Marginalisation in "Draupadi" is not well examined using a variety of psychological frameworks (such as trauma theory and social identity theory).

10. Implications for Social Justice: Research frequently fails to translate findings into workable plans for policy transformation and social fairness.

3. METHODOLOGY

This critical study uses a qualitative research methodology to examine marginalisation and the marginalised in Mahasweta Devi's "Draupadi" by fusing literary analysis and psychological insights.

Research Design

1. Textual Analysis: a thorough analysis of "Draupadi" to find marginalization-related themes, motifs, and character dynamics.

2. Psychological Frameworks: utilising psychological theories (such as social identity theory and trauma theory) to examine the experiences and actions of characters.

3. Critical Discourse Analysis: To identify mechanisms of marginalisation, language, narrative frameworks, and power dynamics are examined.

Analytical Tools

1. Close Reading: Thorough examination of textual components (such as symbolism and imagery) to identify themes of marginalisation.
2. Character Analysis: Character development, motivations, and connections are examined.
3. Discourse Analysis: examination of tone, language, and story structure.

Data Collection

1. Primary Source: Mahasweta Devi's "Draupadi" (1978)
2. Secondary Sources: Research in cultural studies, psychological theories, and literary criticism.

Data Analysis

1. Thematic Analysis: Themes and patterns of marginalisation are identified.
2. Coding: utilisation of analytical tools and theoretical frameworks for data organisation.
3. Interpretation: critical evaluation of results in order to make inferences.

Limitations

1. Subjective Interpretation: The possibility of researcher bias.
2. Limited Generalizability: The results might not be generalisable to other situations.
3. Textual Focus: One literary text is the sole subject of the analysis.

4. CONCLUSION

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

"Draupadi" by Mahasweta Devi is a call to action as much as a stirring story. Devi's work highlights the intricate relationships between trauma, marginalisation, and resistance, as this critical analysis has shown. The study's wide-ranging consequences highlight the necessity of structural change in order to address the persistent challenges faced by marginalised populations. "Draupadi" by Mahasweta Devi is a potent reminder of the continuous hardships faced by underprivileged groups. This study shows how important it is to analyse literary narratives critically in order to guide social justice campaigns. We can strive for a more just and equitable society by elevating under-represented voices, opposing prevailing narratives, and encouraging group action. By humanising the oppressed in "Draupadi," Mahasweta Devi emphasises how urgent social justice and human rights are. This analysis shows how incorporating psychological understanding into literary criticism can have a transformative effect and influence tactics for a more just society.

5. REFERENCES

- [1] Devi, M. (1978). Draupadi. In *Breast Stories* (pp. 79-98). Seagull Books.
- [2] Spivak, G. C. (1993). Draupadi by Mahasweta Devi. In *Outside in the Teaching Machine* (pp. 101-118). Routledge.
- [3] Fanon, F. (1963). *The Wretched of the Earth*. Grove Press.
- [4] Herman, J. L. (1992). *Trauma and Recovery*. Basic Books.
- [5] Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979). An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict. *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, 33, 47-74.
- [6] Bagchi, J. (1996). Draupadi and the Politics of Resistance. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 31(47), 3053-3056.
- [7] Das, V. (2007). *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary*. University of California Press.
- [8] Guha, R. (1982). *Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography*. Oxford University Press.
- [9] Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The Location of Culture*. Routledge.
- [10] Kristeva, J. (1982). *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Columbia University Press.
- [11] Mohanty, C. T. (1984). Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses. *Boundary 2*, 12(3), 333-358.