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## VOICE OF THE VOICELESS IN MAHASWETA DEVI'S DROUPADI

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### Abstract

DROUPADI the name at first asserts the name of our President of India. She is also the result of resistance and tribal movement and the egalitarian society. Here we find the another Droupadi of Mahasweta Devi. Here the protagonist Dopti Majhen played a vital role for the 'voice of the voiceless' by transforming her body into a site of resistance. She raises the voice against male dominance and how the women made themselves liberate and self dependance. Mahasweta Devi's works mainly focuses on marginal issue of tribal men and women in the society. She portrays the lives and struggles of indigenous people and the atrocities inflicted on them. It also highlights 'gender violence' and 'Subaltern Indigenous' identity through Dopti Majhen's Powerful voice. The selected work mainly focuses on the communities that the main stream society is not much familiar with serious discussion of the tribal culture, traditions and practices. Another voice of Droupadi's husband Dulna Majhi's war cry 'Ma ho' Shattle redus like Civilian Society. Their war cry became Arjun Sing's 'diabetic Condition'. Mahasweta Devi portrays Droupadi as a strong tribal woman character who resists all kinds of social norms of Civilian Society.

**Keywords:** Resistance, voice of the voiceless, gender violence, Subaltern Indigenous identity, marginal voice etc

## **Voice of the voiceless in Mahasweta Devi's *Droupadi***

**Introduction:** In Indian subcontinent tribals or Adivasis are considered as the “first Settlers” before India got national identity. When India has the national boundary, Government had tried to trace it's people and tried to read out their Culture and tradition. Tribals are forced to displacement by Aryans and became migrants. After Independence Government tried to enlist all the people and their Culture in order to control them and rest of them made frenzy. To counter attack this studios oblivion Mahasweta Devi raised his voice with her pen, She said tribals are not others they are also the part of Indian Subcontinent. They are not far away from main stream community She strongly condemned the multiple level of marginalisation She is one of the most well- known women writer activist of the post -Independence India. She has portrayed the survival of tribal women protagonist and their angst as marginalised. Jennifer Wenzel observed, “Mahasweta Devi is also sensitive to the long standing cultural and social conflicts in Indian society, exacerbated rather than resolved after Independence, that are among the cause of current deportation. Mahasweta Devi has long been critical of “mainstream” India's benevolent neglect of its Adivasis, or Indigenous people” (Wenzel, 128). Here we find Mahasweta Devi's DROUPADI, Dopti Majhen is the central figure who is the symbol of resistance against state oppression and patriarchal violence. Gayitree Chakraborty Spivak had rightly said, “An erotic object transformed into an object of torture and revenge where the line between heterosexuality and gender violence begins to waver. Droupadi is not only a short story about a struggle of tribal woman but also a Struggle of all Santal society who are marginalised. She is the ‘Subaltern’ voice of voiceless communities. Tribal people are fighting for their rights.

**Textual Analysis :** Dopti Majhen or DROUPADI is the protagonist of the story. She is a tribal woman of 27 years old. She is the resident of Cherakhan of Bankarjah. She is married to Dulna Majhen. Both are ‘most wanted’ in the list of

Government. They fight for their rights and the murdered landlord to claim wells and tubewells which are the main source of

Water in the village. The story begins with “Name Dopti Majhen age twenty seven husband Dulna Majhi (deceased) domicile Cherakhan, Bankrajhar information whether dead or alive and or assistance in arrest one hundred rupees.... (Devi 1997). Both the husband and wife are main criminals for murdering Surja Sahu and his son engaging upper class Wells and tube wells during the draught and not compromising with the police. The police and armed forces tried their best in search out for them. According to Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak “When the Subaltern in order to be heard and gets into the structure of Subaltern speaks in order to be heard and gets into the structure of responsible... resistance, he or she is on the way to becoming an organic intellectual” (Devi 1993). Dopti and Dulna, they are fighting for their rights. The armed forces suspecting them as they are stealing guns, killing grains brokers, landlords, money lenders, law Officers and administrators. The action of searching the couple Droupadi and Dulna was named as operation forest and Arjan Sing was the chief of this operation forest. Arjan Sing got depressed because of this process They are the reason of Arjan Sing's diabetic condition “Arjan Singh fell for a bit into a zombielike state and finally acquired by so irrational a dead of black skinned people that whenever he saw a black person in a ball bag, he swooned, saying. They're killing me, and drank and passed a lot of water” (Devi 1997). They killed the people by using their axe, bow and arrows. Dulna was killed while he was laying and drinking water in the forest. It is described as “As they threw him off spread -eagled and brought bloody from to his mouth, he roared “Ma-ho” and then went limp. They realized later that it was redoubtable Dulna Majhi...” Droupadi manages to escape and begins to operate helping fugitives who have murdered the corrupt people.

However Droupadi was caught by the police Officers. “Now Dopti spreads 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” They kept her in custody. Senanayak ordered “Make her. Do the needful...” Dopdi is raped continuously as loses and gains awareness during the nightmare. Her oppressor believed that this will weaken her will power and strongest confidence in herself. After being repeatedly raped the police man took her back to the tent and asked her to clothe herself because it was the time to meet Senanayak. But Dopdi did not care their words. She proceeds towards Senanayak, naked, full body with blood and her head held high. Senanayak had taken a back quickly after seeing her black skinned bloody naked body. She says “The object of your search, Dopdi Majhen, you asked them to make me. Don’t you want to see how they made me?” Senanayak asked them where is her clothes and ordered Droupadi to wear clothes. But she strongly refused to wear clothes and asked her to rape her, said “Come on counter me, come on counter me”. The story ended with that Senanayak was terribly afraid to see two mangled breasts and her unarmed bloody naked body. Senanayak was afraid to encounter her because she was naked. Mahasweta Devi celebrates Droupadi as a female assets to overcome from the oppression.

**Literature Review:** The short story Mahasweta Devi’s Droupadi emphasizes how a tribal woman like Dopti Majhen shifts from a victim to an active agent of defence. By refusing to cover her bloody naked body continuously raped by police, she challenges her oppressors to view her nakedness as a form of power. She remarks “What’s the use of clothes? You can stripe me, but how can you clothe me again? Are you a man? She looks around and chooses the front of Senanayak’s white bush-shirt to spit the bloody gob and says, there is not man here that I should be ashamed. I will not let you put my cloth on me. What more can you do?” Mahasweta Devi’s description of Sexual intercourse heightens the pressure “Again the process of making her begins. The moon vomits a bit of light and goes to sleep. Only the dark remains.... A compelled spread eagled still

body. Active pistons of flesh rise and fall rise and fall over it...”

### **Mythological Interpretation :**

The story serves as a sharp contrast against the mythological character Droupadi in Mahabharata. Here Lord Krishna appeared as saviour to Droupadi, saved her from Kaourabas. But in Mahasweta Devi’s Droupadi, here miracle does not happen and divine Krishna does not appear to save her honor. We shows the reality that woman like Dopti had nothing to do except to behave like that. Shobha Venkatesh Ghosh says in this regard “Dopdi’s acts is not acting, we submit rather effectiveness of Dopdi’s resistance is not the refusal to act but the refusal to act predictably. ”

**Marginalised Voice:** The literature “Droupadi” by Mahasweta Devi has strong marginalised voice. When Droupadi’s wife Dulna Majhen shot out in the forest, his last word was “Ma ho”. This indicates he left the world and the rest works must be completed by the after word generation. There struggle against oppression or marginalisation must be continued. Again their war song “Samangre hiju lengko mag goj kope Hende rambra keche keche Ponde rambra keche keche ”

means Whoever comes “infront” kill him. This is Mundari language. It’s the cause of fear to Arjan Singh. This again echoed the time of colonial period of ‘Santhal Bidroho’, Sido Kaho with their sister Phulo Murmu and Jhano Murmu revolted against the British. They raised their voice against colonial oppression and united all the santal people and called HUL against British Raj. Their bravery was found in thei HuL Song like-

“Fulo Jhano you take the bow you take the sword

You take the sword both in your hand

You killed the British soldier ”

Famous Historian John Mille in ‘History off British India’ remarks “Santal women has the great consideration during Indian freedom struggle ”. Devi’s Droupadi has the same courage

to stand against the police. When after being raped by the policemen, the guards gave her water to wash and throws her clothes to wear, she laughs. It's mockery to the so called patriarchal society. She came in front of the Senanayak naked and shows her protest against patriarchy.

### Conclusion

Mahasweta Devi's 'Droupadi' presents various forms of 'Victimization' in the society one way or the other. Dopti Majhen is the Subaltern voice of the santal tribal community. Here Dopdi's character does not romanticising women rather she becomes the victim of the lust in "Patriarchal dominant world". She symbolizes as a santal woman who raises his voice against their rights and beliefs under the upper caste authorities. She forced to afraid Senanayak by naked herself and bowed him against her will power. She has no arms, she uses her body as the greatest weapons. The body which was tortured and molested and cause of her downfall, becomes weapons to stand up herself. She has refused to take any advantage from the policemen. So Droupadi is the representative of millions of tribal women who are fighting against oppression and who have courage to challenge the patriarchy. The tribal women have marginalised multiple way as she always lives in fear of 'Victimization'. Mahasweta Devi's Droupadi clearly shows the resistance of a Subaltern tribal woman in critical condition.

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