

DRAUPADI VASTRAHARANAM THEN AND NOW: THE SILENCE BEING CONTINUED.

AUTHORS:

G. MANISHA,

CH. LAXMI HARSHINI,

K. PRAKEERTHI

gvmanisha491@gmail.com, laxmiharshinichilukuri@gmail.com, kuchibhotlaprakeerthi@gmail.com

Students, Department of Management Studies, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's Vivekananda College, Sainikpuri, Hyderabad, Telangana, India

Guided by:

Dr. K. Meena Rani

Assistant Professor, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's
Vivekananda College, Sainikpuri, Hyderabad,
Telangana, India

Abstract:

The present generation urgently needs to be taught ethics and values. Since parents and educational institutions play a vital role in shaping an individual's life, it is more important to prioritize value-based education over materialistic pursuits. As we already know, girls are often taught by their parents how to behave and compromise in certain situations. Similarly, it is crucial for parents and educational institutions to avoid gender inequalities when teaching values such as empathy, responsibility, and morals to boys as well. The Draupadi incident highlights the absence of ethical and moral responsibility in the present world. Draupadi's vastraharanam is still remembered as an epic injustice. That story chose silence over justice, where the only one crying out for help was Draupadi. The incident was not just her personal humiliation but also the failure of scholars, warriors, elders, and rulers—including the very principles of dharma. This episode exposes how ethical and social values are being taught in the present generation. In the contemporary world, where such injustices still continue, modern society often lacks the ability to raise its voice when witnessing similar wrongs.

Keywords: Draupadi vastraharanam, ethics, values, justice, gender inequality, restoring dharma, moral failure of society, epic injustice.

INTRODUCTION:

Whenever we think about Mahabharata, the main thing we have in our minds is the incident of Draupadi being disrobed by Dushasana. Also people make it sound like the whole Mahabharata is about the act of revenge. Draupadi being the main character and in the end Bhima washing her hair with Dushasana's blood. We know that Draupadi was dragged into the hall of gambling by her hair while she was menstruating and was disrobed by Dushasana, and while Krishna re-robing her through a magical intervention. This was an epic failure of dharma where only who helped Draupadi was Krishna and none others where the dharma failed. While still Draupadi had someone by her side to help, in today's world, many girls do not have anyone to take a stand for her in many cases during the time of injustice being caused to her which is also the failure of humanity. Draupadi believed that Krishna would come protect her, but many girls today have no one to believe on. The incidents which are happening in today's world, also highlights the impact of unequal moral education based on gender. So we all know that women are always being taught patience, adjustments and silence while generally men are not being taught about the same. Ethical education should not be gender biased. It must be focusing on moral values and every gender should be equally against injustice.

PROBLEMS BEING FACED: THEN AND NOW:

The incident of vastraharanam was not just an injustice, but also the failure of hall full of great people who chose to be silent instead of helping out. This is being continued in today's world too:

1. **Silence being maintained:** In the Mahabharata, the most blood boiling incident was the vastraharnam of Draupadi and the silence of people who knew a wrong act was being done. Elders like Bhishma and scholars chose silence over justice. In today's world too, the same silence is being continued when the wrong acts like vastraharanam is being done. In today's society, injustice often happens, both physically and digitally, yet intervention never happens. Fear of "what people might think" and legal complications always come in either victims mind or the family of the victim. People are scared to take a stand.
2. **Gender biased education:** Education is not only taught in educational institutions, but also from parents. Gender related discrimination is done a lot today. Girls are constantly being taught on "how to dress", "how to speak", "how to be safe", "how to not talk back", while boys are often not being taught

about the same. Elders rarely teach boys about their responsibility for not being the reason a girl is feeling unsafe. Our education teaches how to be successful but mostly neglects how to make us human.

3. **Twisted Dharma and law:** In the Mahabharata, the dharma failed. The great scholars were silent even though they were witnessing a wrongful act. Similarly, even today, even though there are many laws which are for protecting women, the delayed procedures, blaming the victim, these are making people think twice. People focus on rules and excuses, not fairness.
4. **Objectifying women:** In the epic, Draupadi was treated as a “property” not as a woman, not even a human. The Pandavas lost the bet and Dhushasana dragged her to the hall by her hair. Even in today’s world, women still face objectification, where dignity is weighed on the girl for the family honor, respect and reputation.

SOLUTIONS: STRENGTHENING ETHICAL SENSIBILITY:

1. **Gender equality in education:** Value based education should be taught to both the genders equally. Ethics, values, responsibility should be taught to boys and girls alike. Education must teach the students how to stand against injustice, even though it is difficult.
2. **Courageous and self-reliant:** In the Mahabharata, faith was the strength that Draupadi had. Advanced education must provide girls with cognitive and physical ability to fight back. The society must also ensure that they are not all while they are fighting against injustice.
3. **Re- evaluating epics with modern relevance:** Past like Mahabharata should not just be studied as stories, but also should reflect ethics and morals. Draupadi’s story is not just about revenge, but also a powerful call for a reminder for justice, dignity and responsibility and standing up for what is good and what is bad.
4. **Turning witnesses into defenders:** We need to start teaching children that staying silent in the situation of injustice means taking side of the oppressor. Being a considerate person is not just about not being a culprit it is also about having a courage to step in and speak up for the victim and try to make things right even when it feels difficult.

CONCLUSION:

The cries of Draupadi did not just end in the Mahabharata, they are echoing till today in the streets, workplaces etc. The biggest failure in Mahabharata was not just the bet, but it was a room full of men just watching a woman being humiliated in front of everyone and no one tried to stop it.

We should not just teach this generation to prioritize their future, we should also teach them how to defend a victim, if not so it would be the same as the “silent hall” of the Mahabharata. We just cannot keep waiting for a miracle to happen, we should start taking a stand for the women who are facing injustice. We should start being our own “Krishna” for the “Draupadis” of today. We need to be the voice of the elders in the Mahabharata who lost their backs then.

REFERENCES:

1. Critical Edition of Mahabharata, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune.
2. Vyasa, Mahabharata, translated by Kisari Mohan Ganguli, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers.
3. Articles and editorials from The Hindu and Indian Express on Gender Justice and Social Ethics.
4. UNESCO, Education for Ethical and Moral Values, Policy Reports.
5. Baruah, B. (2015) Reimagining Draupadi in Contemporary Culture. International Journal of English Language, Literature and Translation Studies.
6. Das, G. (2009) The Difficulty of Being Good: On the Subtle Art of Dharma. Oxford University Press.
7. Jha, S. (2025) Did Dharma Fail Draupadi? Rethinking the Mahabharata Medium/Contemporary Critics.
8. Divakaruni, C.B. (2008) The Palace of Illusions, Picador.
9. Pareek, P. (2025) Draupadi: A Mythological Precursor to Modern Feminist Resistance. Research Review International Journal of Multidisciplinary.
10. SciELO South Africa (2017) Understanding Draupadi as a Paragon of Gender and Resistance.
11. Gouda, G.G, and D’Mello, L. (2019) Value Based Education: A Study of Ancient Indian Education System.