

# Decisive Role of Women in the Patriarchal Social Structure of the Mahabharata Period

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*Abstract: According to sociological perspective, all of the scriptures have been socially produced which reflects the socio-cultural system of that specific period. So, to identify the socio-cultural systems as well as gender roles of ancient period, we should reach in the literature of The Mahabharata. In this context, this paper has focused to analyze the dominant and decisive roles that women characters have played in The Mahabharata. To gain the objective, thematic passages from The Mahabharata that correspond to the study's goals are gathered, utilizing literary sources to acquire the secondary data through the historical content analysis method. Similarly, primary information has been gathered through the individual consultations with the experts that are conducted to explore social structural issues related to women's dominant and decisive role-playing condition within the socio-cultural patriarchal system of The Mahabharata's thematic categories. Women characters of Ganga, Satyawati and Gandhari seem to have reflected to play the decisive role as men. These data are analogous with the gender performative theory of Judith Butler. But the theory of patriarchy has not been found analogous on the basis of the analysis of the data derived from The Mahabharata.*

*Keywords: Decisive role of women, gender role, patriarchal social structure, The Mahabharata period*

## Introduction

Women's roles used to be responsible and decisive one since the ancient human civilization before the origin of the patriarchal social structure. The women's authority and the decision-making power used to be within the hands of the women when there used to be matriarchy before the establishment of private property and ownership (Engels, 1984). The women have happened to dependent and their condition turned as of seeing powerless, helpless and in feeble decision-making position from the time of keeping private property in the names of the men's legally by enhancing the men as superior, dominant and powerful by establishing patriarchal socio-cultural structure. The women have had to be submissive, obedient to men and confined to remain within ideological norms and values of patriarchal system (Walby, 1990). It has become almost impossible to explore the real condition of the women having reached physically in the ancient time and it has got only one way of drawing the facts of the role of the women through the scriptures written in the contemporary time. According to sociological perspective, all of the scripture has been socially produced which reflect the socio-cultural system of that specific period (Adhikari et al, 2024A). So, to identify the social systems as well as gender roles of ancient period, we should reach in the literature of The Mahabharata. In this context, Green and Lebihan (2000) have argued that men were involved in domestic affairs and they were not in the decision-making position under the matriarchal system. Furthermore, Chapman (1988) has displayed the similar condition of the male in the society. Men have got socially invisible condition and they have been depicted as voiceless but only as the sensitive lovers and cares of the children and their wives. Likewise, Seidler (1992) has argued that men, being in miserable situation, sometimes manage to write about their pain and men are always attacked politically by the feminists but the pain of the men has become invisible.

In this respect, Lodge (1989) has depicted women as powerful and strong enough as reflected through their dress and clothing. Similarly, Roiphe (1994) has revealed the superior position of women via their dress up but there is lacking the analysis of gender power relationships within the patriarchal socio-cultural structure of The Mahabharata period.

The interpretation and analysis of The Mahabharata have been approached from diverse perspectives. Minkowski (1989) posits that The Mahabharata functions as a narrative nested within narratives, showcasing intricate storytelling techniques within an epic format. His examination delves into the structural complexities and narrative layers inherent in The Mahabharata. On another front, Custodi (2007) explores themes of transsexuality within The Mahabharata, offering a unique lens into the epic's narrative landscape. However, Custodi's analysis does not extend to a comprehensive study of traditional gender roles between males and females, a focus distinct from the present study. Meanwhile, Dhand (2007 & 2009) emphasizes the moral and ethical dimensions of The Mahabharata, highlighting the ethical dilemmas faced by its characters. However, Dhand's work remains silent on the specific gender roles of masculinity and femininity within character analyses, which forms a central theme in this investigation. Similarly, Simson (2007) aligns with Custodi's perspective by suggesting that gender studies in The Mahabharata should be approached metaphorically. Nevertheless, Simson does not systematically trace the functional roles of men and women across multiple episodes and anecdotes within the epic, a focus that distinguishes the current research. Moreover, Fitzrald (2007) examines the longevity of Vishma's life until the end of the Mahabharata war, shedding light on specific character details within the epic. However, Fitzrald's analysis does not engage deeply with the broader themes of gender roles and the functional dynamics of male and female characters, which are central to this study's exploration.

In other words, the social structure is always guided by specific production pattern (Adhikari, 2020B). In the context of production patterns, gender roles have historically been delineated (Adhikari, 2020A), portraying males as agents of domination over women within patriarchal societies. However, before the establishment of family structures, property ownership, and formal states, men experienced marginalization within matriarchal systems. During this period, men occupied a subordinate position, with limited influence and reduced societal status, as social norms and structures were shaped predominantly by matriarchal dynamics where lineage was traced through maternal lines without clear identification of paternal roles. In this respect, Engels (1984) elucidates how the concept of fatherhood became intertwined with the emergence of private property in society. In the absence of individualized property and centralized state structures, maternal roles held prominence, and societal organization was often matrilineal. Males were marginalized within these systems until the advent of private property, which subsequently led to their ascension into dominant roles by controlling property ownership and shaping societal structures. Nevertheless, even within patriarchal frameworks, where males are typically depicted in dominant roles, this study explores instances from The Mahabharata where woman characters assumed pivotal and influential roles. This narrative investigation underscores how, despite overarching patriarchal norms, certain woman characters in The Mahabharata wielded significant authority and decision-making power, challenging traditional gender dynamics and illustrating complex intersections of power, economy, and politics within ancient societal frameworks.

## Objective of Research

Generally, this research has been concerned about the social structural condition and gender relationship of the period of The Mahabharata which has got various dimensions of men and women's relationship in The Mahabharata period. Specifically, this paper has focused to analyze only the dominant and decisive roles that women characters have played in The Mahabharata.

## Research Methodology

The study has been related with the ancient social structure and it has become impossible to visit the ancient socio-cultural structure physically. However, the socio-cultural structure of the ancient time is reflected by the scriptures and the documents produced in the ancient time. In this context, The Mahabharata, has been produced in the ancient time and it has depicted the socio-cultural structure of the time. So, the only way of exploring the roles of the women of ancient time, The Mahabharata has become the primary source adopted for the research. However, in contemporary context, this research is grounded in the philosophical assertion that each social structure has unique historical underpinnings and foundational origins. Denzin & Lincoln (1994) and Krippendorff (2004) have been explored the application of historical content analysis method under the qualitative research approach. To achieve its objectives, the study employs the historical content analysis method, primarily drawing

upon secondary sources for historical data under the qualitative research design. The interpretive approach is required to analyze the data under the qualitative research design (Adhikari et al, 2024B). The methodological approach includes utilizing the library research method, as advocated by Hamzah (2019), renowned for its qualitative research strength in elucidating theoretical origins. Similarly, Kurniawan et al. (2023) have also utilized the library research method to gather historical insights, a method this study has adopted to explore the social dynamics of superior position of woman characters as depicted in *The Mahabharata*. Similarly, to gather the primary information for this research, individual interactions with the experts were conducted to delve into social structural issues of women roles within thematic categories. The research identifies several thematic categories within the social structure of women's condition portrayed in the epic. These categories encompass themes such as the portrayal of the superior female characters, the exploration of invisible yet decisive woman roles, the attribution of women as catalysts for conflict, instances of the nuanced depiction of Gandhari's pseudo blindness among other dimensions. By categorizing these themes, the study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of how *The Mahabharata* portrays and conceptualizes gender roles and power dynamics within its narrative framework. This approach not only enriches our understanding of ancient societal structures but also sheds light on the enduring relevance of these themes in contemporary discourse on gender and history. The following diagram has reflected the methodological framework of the research design.

### Methodological Frame Work

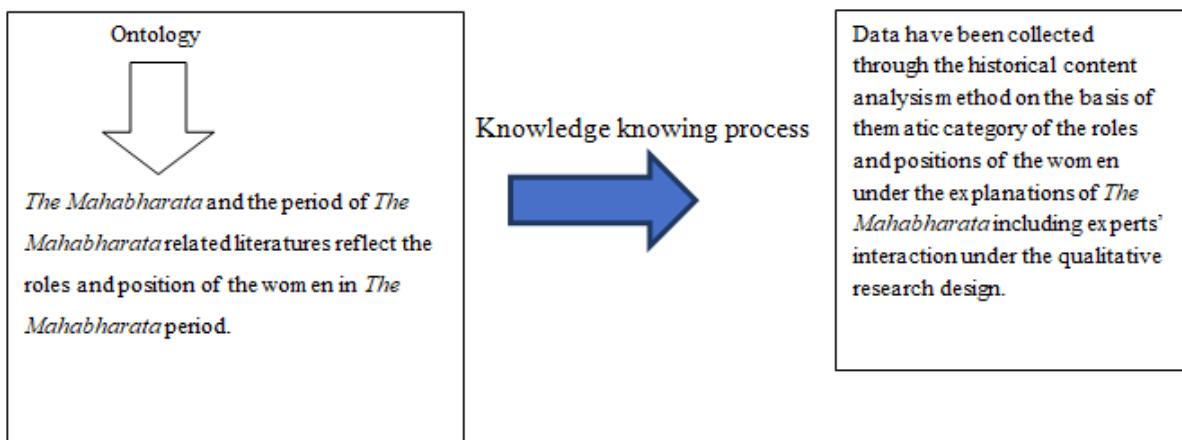


Figure1: Methodological frame work

As part of the research objectives, thematic passages from *The Mahabharata* that correspond to the study's goals are gathered, utilizing literary sources to acquire qualitative data through the historical content analysis method. Additionally, primary data have been sourced through interactions with experts comprising historians, literary scholars, professors, and researchers chosen for their specialized knowledge in social history and the portrayal of women's dominance in playing a decisive role even in the patriarchal social structure of *The Mahabharata* era. Individual consultations with the experts have been conducted to explore social structural issues related to women's dominant and decisive role-playing condition within the socio-cultural patriarchal system of *The Mahabharata*'s thematic categories.

Abidin and Laskar (2020) argue that analyzing historical texts should not be limited to assessing the text itself but should also involve interpreting the intended meaning behind the text. Furthermore, aligning content analysis with its contextual implications can provide valuable insights into the text's significance. In this context, *The Mahabharata* serves as a pivotal source for illuminating various facets of the social structural conditions surrounding female's supremacy in ancient times. The study has employed the content analysis method, integrating both primary and secondary data, to examine these aspects comprehensively. This methodological approach has not only enriched our understanding of how *The Mahabharata* depicts and interprets gender roles and societal power dynamics but also has underscored the importance of contextualizing historical narratives within broader social frameworks.

### Theoretical Orientation

Out of the various theoretical lenses, this research has employed the lens of the gender performative theory for the analysis and in exploring the women's roles in decision making process in the patriarchal social structure of The Mahabharata Period.

### Gender Performativity theory

The gender performative theory has advocated that gender is not identified on the basis of the body and the physical organs but on the basis of the performative roles that the individual displays. In this context, Butler (2015) is renowned for her theory of gender performativity, which challenges conventional notions that link gender solely to biological sex, particularly the rigid categories of "men" and "women," as well as the associated traits of "masculinity" and "femininity." Instead, Butler posits that this traditional understanding of gender is flawed and proposes a redefinition based on actions and expressions. According to her theory, gender identity is constructed through repetitive and stylized performances within socio-cultural contexts. These performances, rather than being determined by one's anatomical body, define and shape what it means to be perceived as male or female in society. Butler's argument underscores the significance of performative roles in shaping and maintaining the socio-cultural structure of gender, challenging essentialist views that link gender exclusively to biological characteristics. Judith Butler's performative theory of gender, developed primarily in her influential book "Gender Trouble" (1990), fundamentally challenges traditional views of gender as a fixed and inherent aspect of individuals based on their biological sex. Butler argues that gender is not something inherent or natural, but rather a performance that individuals engage in. This performance is not a mere imitation of an essential identity but constitutes the very identity it is purported to be. In other words, gender is constructed through repeated actions, gestures, behaviors, and expressions that create the illusion of a natural and coherent gender identity.

The performance of gender is not arbitrary but is governed by societal norms and expectations. Individuals perform gender according to accepted norms and standards within their cultural context. These norms dictate what is considered masculine or feminine, and individuals often internalize and reproduce these norms through their actions. Butler links gender performativity closely with power dynamics. The repetition of gender performances reinforces and reproduces existing power structures and norms within society. This process of normalization through repetition serves to regulate and constrain individuals within specific gender categories. While Butler acknowledges the regulatory function of gender performativity, she also sees potential for subversion and resistance. By challenging and disrupting normative gender performances, individuals can destabilize existing power structures and open up possibilities for alternative gender expressions and identities. Butler's theory critiques essentialist views that tie gender to biological sex. Instead of seeing gender as determined by anatomy or biology, Butler emphasizes its fluidity and variability, shaped by cultural and social practices.

Overall, Butler's performative theory of gender has had a profound impact on feminist theory and queer studies, offering a critical framework for understanding how gender identities are constructed, maintained, and potentially transformed within socio-cultural contexts. The following diagram has reflected the theoretical framework of the research design.

### Theoretical Frame Work

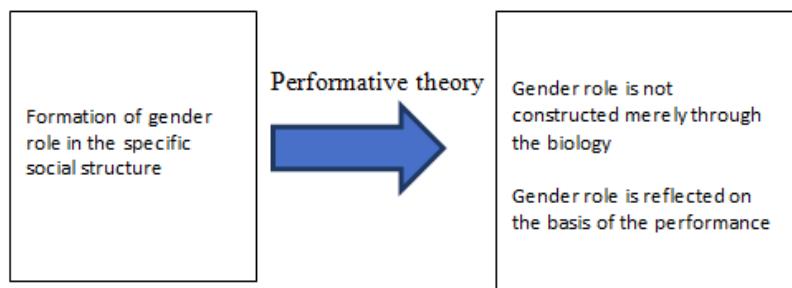


Figure 2: Theoretical Frame Work

### Theory of Patriarchy

Patriarchy refers to the concept of male domination and control to the females by the ideology of the male chauvinism. In this respect, Walby (1986) argues that patriarchy emerges from a framework that prioritizes masculinity, relegating femininity to a subordinate position. In her view, patriarchal societies are structured to exploit women while imposing a regime dominated by masculine norms. Gerda (1988) similarly defines patriarchy as a comprehensive familial, social, ideological, and political system wherein men assert control over women through a variety of mechanisms including

physical force, cultural rituals, legal frameworks, language, customary practices, educational systems, and the division of labor. Likewise, Ritzer (1996 & 2000) characterizes patriarchy as a system designed to control women through rituals, legal frameworks, and other institutional means, dictating the roles women are permitted to occupy and often subordinating them to men across multiple facets of life. However, this perspective overlooks the fundamental interdependence between men and women in forming familial and societal units. It also neglects the essential contributions that both genders make to each other's existence and the functioning of society as a whole.

Moreover, this framework fails to acknowledge the economic significance of women in production processes, often excluding them from recognition. Additionally, it appears unconcerned with safeguarding women's rights and promoting their full participation in social, economic, and political spheres. This perspective is reflected in the theoretical framework depicted in the following diagram, illustrating the need for a critical examination of patriarchal structures and their implications for gender relations and societal dynamics. The following diagram has reflected the theoretical framework of the research design.

### Theoretical Frame Work

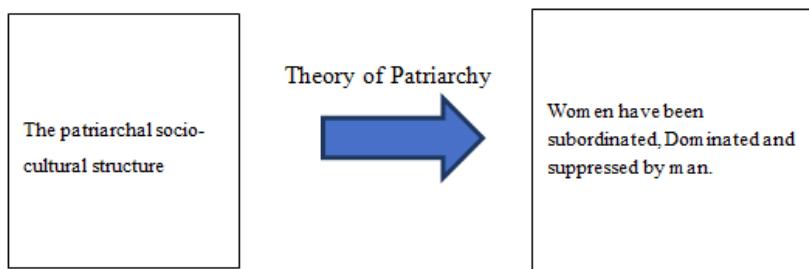


Figure 3: Theoretical and Conceptual Frame Work

## Discussion and Findings

The discussion has been carried out under the various thematic categories on the basis of the primary data of The Mahabharata and the findings have been drawn on the ground of the detail analysis and explanation of female supremacy playing decisive role in patriarchal social structure of The Mahabharata period. The women characters have acted various roles such as loyalty to husband as pseudo blindness of Gandhari, superior female characteristics, invisible but decisive women's role, and women as root cause of battle in The Mahabharata.

### Loyalty to Husband as Pseudo Blindness of Gandhari.

Gandhari pretended as blind wife of the king Dhritarastra by covering her eyes by the piece of cloth but she had the power in her eyes to make the human body as strong as the rock. It has been reflected as she asked her son Duryodhana to come naked in front of her and he had covered his genital parts of his body and it remained weak in his body because she had the power in her eyes to transform the body like a rock by her first sight. As a result, the genital organ of Duryodhan became the cause of his death in the fight with Bhim who had stroked on Duryodhana's weak part of the genital organ. This event shows that Gandhari had the power in her eyes and her blindness was merely pseudo blindness to reveal loyalty to her husband, king Dhritarastra. Karve (1968) has explained that Gandhari's curse to die to Krishna has turned out true and Krishna passed away the way Gandhari had cursed him. In this sense, Gandhari was a dominating and powerful one in the case of ruling and punishing the rivals of her sons.

According to Adi-Parva, Gandhari was the daughter of king Suwal and sister of Sakuni. Gandhari was a devotee of the god Shiva. She had been blessed by God Shiva to give birth hundred kids. Dhritarashtra had come in the age of getting married. Vishma proposed to King for the marital relationship between Dhritarashtra and Gandhari. Kuru dynasty was very famous and prestigious at that time. So, king Suwal accepted the proposal and agreed to marry Gandhari to blind, Dhritarashtra who was blind by birth. He was the son of Ambika and was born under the Niyoga (donating sperm by sexual relationship by Vyasa to the widow, Ambika) system. Ambika had participated in a sexual relationship with Vyasa forcibly and in a fearful situation by the order of her mother-in-law, Satyawati, after the death of Vichitravirya since she did not have any children from Vichitravirya. So, Ambika closed her eyes in the process of a sexual relationship with black-skinned and fearful bearded

Vyasa. Due to that reason, Dhritarashtra was born as a blind baby. But Gandhari was not blind. When she married blind, Dhritarashtra, then she determined to cover her eyes like the blind. It was like pseudo-blindness for the loyalty to the husband. Dhritarashtra suffered blindness by birth. Gandhari was not suffered from blindness but she was thought to be a pseudo-blind by covering of her both eyes. This content reflects the female loyalty and salutation to the husband (D.P. Subedi, Personal communication, July 8, 2022). But Gandhari was powerful and strong queen whose curse to Krishan to die had become true in the tale of The Mahabharata.

### **Superior Female Characteristics**

The superior women characters are those who display ideal roles in the family and tend to be loyal to husbands, mothers-in-law, and in the system of the family. Satyawati, the wife of Santanu plays supreme role to run the kingdom of Hastinapur after the demise of her husband, King Santanu. She has got sole power to decide what to do and how to do the solution of any problem in the kingdom. She takes the advice of Vishma, the eighth son of Santanu's first wife Ganda and she even calls Vyasa for Niyoga as soon as her son, Vichitravirya dies without any child from his two queens Ambika and Ambalika. She even asks Vishma to perform the role of injecting to two widows for the birth of sons but Visma had taken oath not to get married but he refused it since he had taken a great oath to remain bachelor throughout his life for the happiness of his father, Santanu for marrying Satyawati and her sons to be the kings of Hastinapur after the demise of the king Santanu. Then Satyawati took the consent of Vishma and called Vyasa and she was able to force Vyasa to perform the role of having sexual relationship with the widows of her son, Vichitravirya and she was able to fulfil her wish. She had such a superior role to handle all the affairs in the kingdom of Hastinapur. In this context, Karve (1968) has also stated that Satyawati had forced Vyasa to perform the role of Niyoga (to have the sexual relationship with the widows, Ambika and Ambalika for the birth of the sons). Likewise, Kunti performs the leading role of the Pandavas family. She does not scare to send her sons-Pandavas in the forest. She advises her sons to be always loyal, friendly, honest, disciplined, and to act with justice among the Kauravas and to display the ideal role of truth in society. As a widow, she was able to adjust herself in the conflicting family structure of The Mahabharata. She had due respect and honor to Vishma and Bidur including Dhritarashtra and Gandhari. She was able to balance the kin relationship and the Kuru dynasty properly and accordingly. Similarly, Karve (1968) has described the role of Kunti in her characterization as superior female character in The Mahabharata. Furthermore, Hildebeitel (2007) has argued that Draupadi has acted enough like a volcano to reduce the enemies into ashes. In this sense, Draupadi too had played the decisive role in the tale of The Mahabharata.

Draupadi was as loyal to her mother-in-law as Kunti did. She got married with Arjun but consented to be the wife of all the Pandavas. She participated in all kinds of joys and sorrows. She, too, went in the forest with Pandavas and spent thirteen years' life of exile. She was able to face any kinds of risks of her life. She raised the questions of dishonoring the female character in the assembly of the palace with Bidur and Vishma. She did not mind Pandavas having other plural wives apart from herself. It was her great sign of loyalty towards her husbands and the example of the ideal woman in the patriarchal socio-cultural structure of The Mahabharata era. In the same way, Gandhari's role of loyalty to her husband is superior one. She displayed the supreme loyalty to her husband by covering her both eyes to resemble with her blind husband (M.Thakuri, Personal communication, July 18, 2022). These personal conversations with various experts and the ideas of the critics have pointed out the superior roles of the female characters in The Mahabharata. In this sense, the female characters are in dominant position in making apt and their intended decision even in the patriarchal socio-cultural structure of The Mahabharata era.

### **Invisible but Decisive Woman's Role**

The Mahabharata has revealed the woman's dominant role in the elite class group as displayed through the major women characters' activities. The queen Ganga had put the condition to the king, Santanu not to raise any questions against her after getting her married. So, the queen Ganga went on throwing the newly born sons one by one in the river, Ganga. The king Santanu was worried and helpless to see such sinful activities of the queen but he was already silenced via condition put to him before their marriage. As a result, he had to be just a witness of the queen, Ganga's act of putting the infants in the river, Ganga. The king Santanu, breaks the condition and stands against the queen, Ganga, as she was about to put the eighth infant, Vishma, who was identified as Devrat at the time of his birth, in the river, Ganga. Then she saved the life of the infant, Vishma and she also abandoned the palace. She vanished with the infant and herself in the river, Ganga. She trained Vishma, made him

smart to use weapons and she returned him to his father, the king, Santanu to support him to continue the Kuru lineage and Kuru dynasty in Hastinapur. So, Vishma was a kind of gift to the king, Santanu who became glad to receive his son being loyal, obedient, skillful in using weapons, dedicated and devoted to the command and order of the father, Santanu. In later days, Vishma had to play the role of the guardian in the Kingdom of Dhristarasta in Hastinapur to settle the conflict between the Pandavas and Kauravas. When Vishma was in difficulty, he used to go the river, Ganga, and implore to his mother, Ganga, to appear to him and to instruct him. So, his mother used to appear and guide him what to do in Hastinapur. In this sense, the role of the queen, Ganga, has become powerful and dominant in invisible form to resume the Kuru lineage and Kuru dynasty in the patriarchal social structure of The Mahabharata (S.D. Gautam, Personal communication, July 11, 2022). This personal conversation displays that the queen Ganga used to be the supreme female figure to control and guide her husband king Santanu and her son Vishma in invisible form while being queen in the palace with the king Santanu and after Santanu's death to run the state Hastinapur by her son Vishma. In this sense, the queen Ganga had even got invisible supreme power in the kingdom of Hastinapur as she got married with the king Santanu. She went on throwing her new born sons one after another till the seventh. Karve (1968) has even argued that the king Santanu was powerless and helpless in front of the queen Ganga and he had no power even to ask her not to throw his newly born sons in the river, Ganga. In the same way, Karve (1968) has explained that Vishma was as powerless and helpless to take any decision against the widow queen, Satyawati and Vishma was to be silently obeyed what Satyawati commanded him. Invisible power of the state was with Satyawati but not with Vishma and even not with Vidura who was frustrated and helpless because he was the son of maiden-slave of the palace even though the father of Pandu, Dhritarashtra and Vidura was the same person, Vyasa in The Mahabharata.

### **Woman as Root Cause of Battle in the Mahabharata**

Woman's issues are beyond control of men in The Mahabharata. Females have acted prime role to cause the war. The conflict between the Kauravas and Pandavas got its seeds through the main treatment by Draupadi to Duryodhana in the program invited him to participate in the state Indraparasta that was given to Yudhisthira and his brothers by Dhristarasta. The decoration of the castle in Indraparasta was beyond the recognition of the real and the artificial one. Duryodhana was pacing on the down floor of the castle and he got fallen in the swimming pool as his failure to find out the fact of the position of the floor in Indraparasta. As he fell down in the swimming pool, Draupadi saw him from the upstairs. She teased him and told him that blind's son certainly would be blind. Such harsh and painful words touched in the dignity, status and honor of his father Dhritarasta and Duryodhana himself. These words of the queen, Draupadi, turned out to Duryodhana as the seeds of taking revenge against Draupadi and Pandavas.

Duryodhana planned to take the revenge with Draupadi and Pandavas by making a trick of the game of dice. So, Duryodhana convinced Dhristarasta to manage the game of dice in the palace as the secret plot of Shakuni. Dhritarasta got compelled in it and the game was not played with the real ideals of winning and defeating between the Kauravas and Pandavas but to send the Pandavas in the forest as an exile for thirteen years and also to dishonor Draupadi in the assembly of the palace in front of the royal dignitaries and Duryodhana even called Draupadi as a whore to remain as the wife of the five brothers. Draupadi would have been presented as a naked one in case lord Krishna had not protected her female dignity. When Yudhisthira knew that Draupadi had called Duryodhana as the blind person as the son of the blind father, he told her that it was her great blunder and she should not have said so. Yudhisthira was upset with that event and Draupadi was ready to be sentenced whatever it would be apt for her fault but Yudhisthira could do nothing against her since she was the female and Yudhisthira too has been found out as the powerless of punishing Draupadi for her error. It indicates the female power and superiority of women to men in The Mahabharata. The battle continued and Draupadi wanted the blood of Dussasan who had brought her in the assembly of the palace forcefully in the game of dice.

Similarly, Bhima had promised Draupadi to fulfil her will and did it too. In this sense, all five Pandavas served Draupadi to make her happy. She was the root cause of devastation of all the humans who got involved in the war of The Mahabharata. (Personal communication with Modanath Prasrit July 2022). This personal communication with Prasrit displays how powerful Draupadi used to be in the entire events of The Mahabharata. Similarly, Karve (1968) has described decisive role and character of Draupadi and Karve has displayed a powerful role of Draupadi in The Mahabharata while portraying the character of Draupadi.

## Conclusion

Gandhari, the queen, has been identified as the most powerful woman character found to be acting as a pseudo blindness but having superior power of transforming the body of her son Duryodhan as a rock by the power of her first sight in his naked parts of the body and her curse to the Lord Krishna has been found to turn out to be true in his death. Satyawati seems to have explored as the superior and powerful woman character of The Mahabharata. She has been found in playing the decisive role in the process of decision making in the state, Hastinapur and she seems to have handled all the male characters including Vishma, Bidur, and Vyasa himself as a most powerful and dominating woman with woman body but with the role of man in The Mahabharata. Likewise, Draupadi has been recognized as the superior and powerful woman character as the queen Satyawati in the story of The Mahabharata. She seems to have been known as the root cause of the battle of The Mahabharata. The role of Ganga, the wife of the king Santanu and the mother of Vishma, has been found to have acted powerful performative role. The king Santanu has been found to be beyond the power of controlling Ganga to throw all his newly born sons in the river. The king Santanu has been found to become powerless and helpless even though he had the power as the king. He seems to have found to remain only as an observer and he seems to have got agony of losing all the newly born sons one by one. Ganga seems to have gained the power from the king Santanu not to raise any questions regarding her actions before she got married with him. Ganga's role of taking Vishma with her with the promise of returning him to Santanu later seems to have found as another performative role of power exercise of woman in the socio-cultural structure of patriarchy. The king Santanu seems to have found to remain quiet in Ganga's decision of taking Vishma with her and the king Santanu has been found just to wait and see the arrival of Vishma back to him. In the same way, Ganga has asked Vishma to recall her whenever he needs the proper guidance in leading the nation, Hastinapur and Vishma has been found meeting his mother, Ganga at the shore of the river Ganga to receive the proper guideline to rule and protect the state, Hastinapur in every time of difficulty. The aforementioned women characters, Ganga, Satyawati, and Gandhari seem to have reflected to play the decisive role as a man in patriarchal socio-cultural structure of patriarchy. These data have been found to be analogous with the gender performative theory of Judith Butler. But the theory of patriarchy has not been found analogous through the analysis of the data derived from The Mahabharata. Women seem to have held a significant role despite the prevailing patriarchal socio-cultural structure of Mahabharata period.

### Implication of the Research

This research has depicted the condition of the women of the ancient time. It has assisted for the policy makers in empowering the women and making them to play their decisive roles even in the patriarchal socio-culture structure of the modern time. It has made the women to be aware for their roles to play in the socio-cultural structure of the patriarchy even in the present time by the knowledge of the ancient time.

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