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## **Representation of Dopdi as a Warrior Without a Weapon in Mahasweta Devi's Draupadi**

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## REPRESENTATION OF DOPDI AS A WARRIOR WITHOUT A WEAPON IN MAHASWETA DEVI'S DRAUPADI

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### Abstract

Mahasweta Devi is one of the most prominent and audacious voices in Bangla literature and is probably the most widely translated Indian writer working in a vernacular language. Her writings are mostly based on tribes and tribal life which gives a vivid and accurate description of their world and thoughts. One of the tales from the "Breast Trilogy" in the Breast Tales is "Draupadi". Mahasweta Devi featured in the anthology Agnigarbha (Womb of Fire) brief, loosely related political stories narrating bold and scathing critique of state-sponsored violence. In contrast to Draupadi, the mythical princess, and queen of the Pandavas, who has the protection of the male patriarch against the "vastraharan," Mahasweta Devi's Dopdi is a subaltern where the state patriarch is instrumental in her "vastraharan" and dishonoring her. Both the story and the character are inspired by myth, but they have been greatly displaced from the original location. In this paper, we will focus on the character of 'Dopdi' and see how she fights against all her enemies without any weapon. The paper talks about the relevance of 'Dopdi' in the contemporary era and focuses study on examining the similarities and differences between the two 'Draupadi'.

**Keywords:** Exploitation, Feminism, Myth, Patriarchy, Subaltern and Tribal.

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**Objective:**

- To understand the relevance of 'Dopdi' in the Indian Context.
- To compare Mahabharat's Draupadi and Mahasweta Devi 'Dopdi'.
- To analyze Dopdi's role in attaining rights and freedom for her community.
- To study the character of Dopdi as a warrior without a weapon in hand.

**Review of Literature**

The paper has examined the role of women from the past to the present and it is found that women were being subjugated in society for ages. How they were suppressed by society on several occasions. It can be studied through history and understood how society has constructed the role of genders. Dr. Ramyabrata Chakraborty in her paper studies the short story of Mahasweta Devi 'Draupadi' and tries to analyze it in the light of liminality and marginality. She examines the brutal oppression faced by the tribal communities at the hands of the powerful and upper-class. The work of Dr. Munmy Chhetry Baruah compares the 'Draupadi' of the epic 'Mahabharata' and the 'Dopdi' of Mahasweta Devi. She explores one of the incidents from Imphal, Manipur where the females protested against the 'Assam Rifles' at their headquarters in Imphal in 2005 where they strip themselves naked to show resilience, as the researcher says they were inspired by the 'Dopdi' of Mahasweta Devi. In her essay, Neluka Silva sought to examine how Mahasweta Devi's "Draupadi" short story depicts women's involvement in revolutionary activity. Analysing the outlines of Mahasweta Devi's historical involvement, which appears to result from her subalternist goal, is the work of another researcher by the name of Anita Goswami. She also concentrated on how Mahasweta Devi's "Dopdi" humorously reverses the signals of the epic's semiotics in order to confound, perplex, and frighten the male hegemonic power structure. In his writing, Akshaya Ramesh examines the details of the short story "Draupadi" by Mahasweta Devi, in which a tribal lady named "Dopdi" experiences third-degree sexual abuse. He examines how Mahasweta Devi represents the actual face of feminist assertion in "Dopdi," where she uses her whole mental capacity.

**Research Gap**

This paper tries to consider Mahasweta Devi's "Draupadi" from a different perspective. In this work, the scholar has tried to analyze the character of 'Dopdi' as a warrior who is fighting against oppression and suppression at the hands of the

people in power and also focused on the role played by her where it has been studied how she has fought against all her enemies without any weapon.

**Introduction**

Mahasweta Devi is a prominent modern Bengali novelist who has written over a hundred works, including novels, dramas, and collections of short stories. Bengali is the official language of Bangladesh and the eastern Indian state of West Bengal.\*. She was honored with important accolades for her works and frequently gave voice to tribal women who were marginalized in society and more likely to become victims in a "patriarchal" culture ruled by men. As one of the most well-known and contentious works of fiction, "Draupadi" depicts a woman from the "Santhal tribe" who experiences injustice, social oppression, and violence but still dares to speak out against these wrongdoings and fight against the racial and gender discrimination that women experience. She is mistreated, ignorant, and tribal, yet despite all these things, she rebelled against men for the rights and freedom of her community to fight against male oppression.

The Draupadi tale takes place among Bengal's indigenous people. A Santhal tribe girl named Draupadi, or Dopdi as her name is spelled in dialect, is weak to injustice but strong-willed and courageous enough to fight societal tyranny and violence, even as she works to dismantle longstanding systems of race and gender inequality. The story's portrayal of Dopdi Meihen as an ignorant, dumb tribal lady is what I find most fascinating. She nevertheless lives a politicized existence because she is fighting in arms for the independence and liberties of the tribal people. The government uses every action at its disposal, including abduction, murder, and rape; any tribal fatalities that occur while being held are always deemed "accidents." In West Bengal, Draupadi and her spouse Dulna are listed as being "most wanted." They murder rich landowners to take wells and tube wells, the village's primary water supplies. They struggle to protect their access to the most fundamental food sources. The police ultimately shoot and kill Dulna, but Draupadi escapes and starts working to assist fugitives who have killed dishonest landowners and property owners to escape. She deceives the police who diplomatically are after her so that the location of the fugitives' camp is kept a secret. She is eventually apprehended and detained by authorities. Here is where the story begins. Over the course of a few days, Draupadi is repeatedly raped, denied food and water, and tortured by

numerous policemen who assert that their orders to "make her" came from their Bade Sahib, officer Senanayak, who is in charge of her case. Senanayak, a government representative assigned to find Draupadi and stop her misbehaviour. The military officer known as Senanayak will feed foxes, vultures, hyenas, wild cats, ants, and worms with the body parts of any captured tribal activists, including their eyeballs, intestines, stomachs, hearts, and genitalia.

This policeman is a harsh, thoughtless guy. The police bring her back to the shelter after a few days and tell her to get dressed before meeting Senanayak. The guard carries a pail of water ahead so she may wash herself while she giggles, tosses the water on the ground, and shreds the bit of clothes covering her body. Wearing nothing but a shirt, she leaves her shelter and walks towards Senanayak. Senanayak quickly shifts his sight away from her form after being surprised. Her palms are on her hips as she walks up to him and says, "The object" of your quest, Dopdi Mehjen. To make me, you asked them to. Do you not want to see how I was created? (Draupadi 402). She fiercely responds to Senanayak's question about where her clothes are by claiming that they are worthless because, once she has been stripped, she cannot be re clothed. With revulsion, she spits on Senanayak and declares "How can you clothe me? Are you a man? There isn't a man here, that I should be ashamed" (Draupadi 402). For the first time, Senanayak is scared to defend himself against a defenseless woman as she presses him with her uncovered breasts. Draupadi utilizes her body as her best tool at that time even though she is without any weaponry. The very body that was used against her tormented, and blamed for her decline becomes the tool she uses to defend herself. She's been physically abused, but she won't let them use her feelings against her. Draupadi understands that raping women does not make males more "masculine" than other animals. In actuality, it defeats the entire goal. Here, Mahasweta Devi depicts Draupadi as a powerful feminine figure who defies societal norms and sexual orientation. She confronts her abusers in a stunning concluding scene of the tale, bloodied and bare but ferociously resilient.

The main character serves as the narrative's focal point of the narrative, illuminating how women are seen as lesser members of society. Mahasweta Devi Draupadi has also been compared to the Mahabharata's "Draupadi," and a Purana has also been derived from that.

Renuka served as kritya during the Kritar yuga. Sita was Kritya during the Satya yuga.

Draupadi was Kritya in the Dwaparyuga, and Krityas are present in every home in the Kalyugas. (Ramesh p.308)

This stanza describes how Draupadi in antiquity deals with male domination, which is a reproduction of "Dopdi" in modern times. Even though Dopdi was ignorant and illiterate, she was the bravest among the other characters in the narrative, and she illustrates how society has to change so that marginalized people aren't treated unfairly by those in the upper class. She has fought for all of society's women who have been subjected to harassment and unfair treatment because of the male predominance in society. According to the narrative, she stood behind her husband and engaged in combat until the "Senanayak" began to feel terrified. This demonstrates Dopdi's tenacity in the narrative. The story makes it very evident that Dopdi was not only the victim but also the one who opposed the "Senanayak." Despite being hounded by them, she engaged them in combat using only her nude body and without the assistance of any weapons. Bell Hooks also made a pertinent statement: The goal of feminism is to eradicate sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression. (Hooks viii). The police target Dopdi because of her gender, class, and political ideas, making her narrative one of oppression and exploitation. The structural problems that support this sort of violence and prejudice are what feminism aims to overcome.

Dopdi is portrayed in the narrative as an unyielding individual who does not let the brutality, she encounters break her. Even while they beat and rape her, she fights back against the police's attempts to get information out of her. This might be understood in light of Audre Lorde's adage, "Taking care of myself is an act of political warfare because it is not self-indulgence but rather self-preservation." (Lorde 40). Dopdi's resistance is an act of political and self-preservation since she won't let the cops take control of her or her body. Overall, Dopdi's persona in "Draupadi" captures the adversity and tenacity of repressed women in a patriarchal culture. Her tale illustrates how political oppression, class inequality, and gender inequality interact to affect how women experience violence and discrimination, as seen through the lens of feminist philosophy.

"The personal is political" (Heywood p.49). This quotation made famous by radical feminists emphasizes the notion that bigger social and political systems frequently influence individual experiences. This idea is reflected in Dopdi's experiences as a tribal woman residing under Indian governmental authority. She has experienced a variety of types of oppression, such

as violence, deprivation, and prejudice, all of which have their roots in the wider social and political backdrop of colonialism and caste-based inequalities in India's past. "Feminism is the radical notion that women are human beings." This quotation by feminist author Cheris Kramarae emphasizes the notion that historically, women have not been accorded full personhood and agency. This idea is best shown by Dopdi's character, who fiercely fights against patriarchy and attempts by the government to deny her fundamental human rights. She insists on her autonomy and agency rather than allowing herself to be reduced to the status of a simple victim or object.

### **To understand the relevance of 'Dopdi' in the Indian Context**

Devi offers a powerful female character who defies social norms and sexual expectations while being exploited and marginalised. Mahasweta Devi, who considers herself less of a feminist and more of a humanist, contends that a woman should be evaluated as a human and not in terms of her gender, ethnicity, caste, or social status. She had a physique that smelled like a newly bloomed lotus, and she was a very clever, virtuous woman. Only a few of women in Hindu mythology were forceful and outspoken in the presence of males. One of them was named Draupadi. Many people view her as the first feminist in Hindu mythology. The irony resides in the fact that tribal peoples reject aryan civilization, as is evident, but they are prohibited from speaking Sanskrit, the language of Aryan civilization, much like Tribals and members of low castes are. Every time I hear about the many gang rapes in India, I immediately recall this incident. I also consider Draupadi from the Mahabharata. In order for gang rape to be recalled in such graphic detail in mythology, it must have been occurring "then" as well. Rape is an unspeakably violent, terrifying, and traumatising crime. Additionally, Rajeswari Sunder Rajan's essay on sati, the agony of self-immolation, and the purposeful spectacle Hindu males subject female bodies to comes to mind. It depresses me that we must repeatedly read accounts of societal trauma and suffering in order to maintain the resistance. Even as a woman who has never been sexually assaulted, the fact that we are required to read Mahasweta Devi over and over again makes me angry; I can't even begin to understand how it shocks people who have experienced sexual assault's psyches. However, in the #MeToo age, where women do speak up (thank you, brave fighters and survivors!) — where they metaphorically imitate Dopdi's nakedness - so many women continue to go unheard and are

stripped bare once more. No man's life was destroyed, but the female cheerleader still goes on. Men continue to hold positions of authority while harassing and raping other people. In India, gang rapes as well as other forms of female body mutilation and immolation are on the rise. They manage to mutilate us in a billion different ways when they don't murder us in the womb, take our bodies as dowry, or splash acid in our faces. Despite the fact that I completely concur with both your interpretation and Spivak's (who has served as a feminist poco stanadayani for many of us), this narrative repeatedly leaves me feeling both helpless and indignant. But I'm aware. Empty rage or giving up are not options we can afford. I have no idea how to make it so that every time this is read, MD's account of caste and gender-based violence no longer rings genuine. Giving money to organisations that empower women, support victims and survivors, mobilise the public, and continue to sing the Lastesis song in our residences, schools, workplaces, public spaces, and bedrooms comes to mind. It's the police. The jury The president and the state. Describe #Metoo American political slogan "Believe women" that sprang from the #MeToo movement. It alludes to taking sexual assault and harassment claims made by women at face value. The phrase, according to Jude Doyle, who writes for Elle, implies "don't assume women as a gender are especially deceptive or vindictive, and recognise that false allegations are less common than real ones." As millions of women spoke up about the sexual abuse they had endured, the #MeToo movement brought attention to gender disparities and power relationships. This group of voices, which were no longer mute, had real-world repercussions that stretched around the globe, with heads of companies being fired and public figures being held accountable. Public personalities and businesses are being held accountable. The body that was raped and abused is also utilised in reverse at the conclusion of the narrative when she faces the army commanders with her nude body. Dopdi has endured physical violence, but she won't allow herself to be emotionally hurt. This is pertinent to the current movement, then.

### **To compare Mahabharat's Draupadi and Mahasweti Devi's 'Dopdi'**

In the Mahabharata, Draupadi had born with a lot of beauty and great good fortune. She was the daughter of a great king named Draupadi and when she was born, it had been said by the celestial sound that she will be proven the main cause for the destruction of the Kauravas and many Kshatriyas. It means a lot of events had been fixed

by the birth of Draupadi. Draupadi in Mahabharat has been described as:

"A girl named Panchali, who was blessed with amazing luck, was also quite attractive. Her skin was dark, her hair was blue and curly, and her eyes were black and as big as lotus petals. Her eyebrows were fair, her breasts were deep, and her nails were exquisitely convex and as brilliant as burnished copper. She truly resembled the daughter of a heavenly who was born among mankind. Her body released a blue lotus-like scent that could be smelled from two kilometres away. There was no one on earth who could match her beauty. She may be wanted (for marriage) by a celestial, a Danava, or a Yaksha, much like a celestial herself. A spirit voice said when this girl with fair hips was born, "This dark-complexioned girl will be the first of all women, and she will be the reason for the demise of many Kshatriyas." The Kauravas will face several dangers as this one with the thin waist eventually fulfils the gods' mission. Adi Parva: Chaitraratha Parva: Section CLXIX of Book 1 of The Mahabharata.

But if we look upon Mahasweta's Dopdi, "Name Dopdi Mejhen, age twenty-seven, husband Dulna Majhi (deceased)" (Spivak,392) -such introduction in the form of a lookout poster and the exchanges that pass between two livered uniforms indicate that Dopdi does not fit in the status quo of the society, hence need no formal introduction. she is described as "Most notorious female." Her notoriety resides upon her being a tribal Naxalite woman--her predicament is obvious because of any of the tripartite identities she carries with her. These three words, 'tribal', 'Naxalite', and woman' contain in themselves the essence of the subaltern. She belongs to the Santhal tribe and a very poor family her father is not a king and she is not as beautiful as epic heroin Draupadi. Her body is black, and she has not anything special that has been gotten by God. Dopdi is a gendered subaltern who is subject to double subalternation as a woman belonging to the lowest strata of the economic class, firstly in the form of being a woman and secondly in the form of being a low cast (tribal). Her current status is described as that of an activist of the Naxalite movement of the 1970s, in the northern part of West Bengal, and as a fugitive on the run from the police.

Draupadi lived in a royal family as a queen with her five warrior husbands and all have their unique power. But after that when her husband bet her in the game of dice and when he lost her then the winning party (kaurav) tried to disrobe her. Then she is tried to be naked by Duhshasna, and she looks upon her five husbands, who are the greatest

warriors on the earth, but they are helpless after that she thinks that she has the greatest five warrior husbands, but all are helpless to save her then ultimately she prays to lord Krishna and he saves her to be naked. But Mahasweta's Dopdi has only one husband (Dulna Manjhi) and her comrades-in-arms. After being pursued like an animal by the Special Forces deployed against the Naxalites, Dulna was slain in a police confrontation. At the very beginning of the story itself, they are all either dead or injured; and what Dopdi is left with is only her courage and will. This marks a radical shift from the original Draupadi of myth to the modern one. In Spivak's words, we can say that the story "traces the refraction, even distortion that a dominant Hindu myth suffers when displaced into a non-Hindu subaltern space and filtered through a subaltern consciousness" (Spivak, 1987). Dopdi too has five 'Pandavas' but conjugally she belongs only to one – the deceased Dulna Majhi – while the rest are all her fellow insurgents bound together in a cause. But when she traps in a wrong murder case then she gets undressed in the terrifying and dark woods, where no supernatural force can save her. She finds herself in a predicament where she must take responsibility for herself. When his wife was gang raped by the cops, her husband—a plain man who isn't as wonderful as Draupadi's spouse in the Epic—was

The mythical Draupadi's prayer requests this divine' male force' to save her in its entirety. In the Mahabharata, Draupadi is portrayed as a vulnerable woman who is pleading with parental forces for protection. On the other side, Mahasweta's courageous Dopdi indicates that she is a strong woman and never requests assistance or any kind of rescue from any male authority. In India particularly, according to the Hindu religion, a husband is a god for a woman and when she was being raped by the police she did never remember her husband as well as any god. She is too self-dominant to allow the patriarchal concept of a woman's sexual "honour" to exist. She refuses to submit to the ruling state of a country that is infused with the memory of fear and bloodshed. After being gang-raped multiple times. The story ends with Dopdi walking towards Senanayak flaunting her ravaged and naked body, "her head held high" (Draupadi 402). Faced with this woman, whose audacity Senanayak is unable to negotiate, he becomes the silenced subject. With the boundaries between the Self and the Other completely breached, for the first time, he knows an irrational fear. Power itself is questioned when Dopdi says "You can take my clothes off, but how will you dress me again? What gender are you?. What makes the story so complex is the fact that

Dopdi's resistance comes from within the situation which binds her.

Mahasweta's Dopdi does what the mythological Draupadi could not. In the absence of a patriarch who could save her from being dishonored miraculously, she disrobes herself. The victim of multiple rapes, at the end she confronts her apprehender Senanayak with a naked body. By refusing to cover herself after she is raped, Dopdi negates Senanayak's brutal attempt to control and dominate her. Symbolically it reverses the very power relationship which decrees the man as the subject and the woman, as his object. Dopdi taunts Senanayak in the following words:

*"What good are clothes? You can take my clothes off, but how can you put them back on? A guy, are you?... Not a single male in this room should make me feel humiliated. I won't allow you to cover me with my cloth. What can you do to help? Let's counter each other, shall we? Senanayak is pushed by Dopdi using her two broken breasts, and for the first time, she is terrified to approach an unarmed target."* (Draupadi 402).

The subaltern's identity in relation to the hegemonic systems as represented by the police officers and Officer Senanayak may be observed in the character of Dopdi. Dopdi's body therefore becomes a location of both gendered resistance and the exercise of authoritarian control. Dopdi endures the pain of being raped by several men thanks to the support of another guy, Arijit, who implores her to save her allies rather than herself. She responds to the police in an open manner, yet the assault on her body muffles this masculine authority's speech. Her unwillingness to wear clothing challenges the phallogocentric dominance, and the exploitation of her body provides her the power to reject the police officers' dominant patriarchy.

Devi depicts a powerful woman in Draupadi who defies social norms and sexual expectations while being exploited and marginalised.

Dopdi transforms her body's physicality from helplessness to ferocious resistance..

### **Dopdi's Role in Freedom and Rights for her community.**

Dopdi's part in the book and its adaptation into other media, like plays and films, have significantly contributed to bringing attention to the condition of tribal women in India. Her persona has come to represent defiance and the struggle for liberty against tyranny. Dopdi, a character in the book, is a Santhal tribe member who resides in a small West Bengali village. She is married to a fellow Santhal, but when her spouse is wrongfully identified as a Maoist and executed by the police,

her life is ruined. After that, a bunch of upper-caste landlords and police officers kidnap Dopdi and sexually assault her. Despite the pain, Dopdi chooses to become a warrior rather than a victim. She enlists in a Maoist guerilla organization and takes the lead in the group's struggle against the oppressive elements of the government and upper-caste landlords. Mahasweta Devi's persona captures the tenacity, bravery, and tenacity of tribal women who have led India's social and political movements with leadership roles. Dopdi's narrative serves as a potent reminder of the need to address the injustices that marginalized populations experience as well as the crucial role that women play in the struggle for their rights. Dopdi's tenacity and bravery encourage other tribal women to take up the struggle for their liberation and rights.

Dopdi's tale is more than just a piece of fiction; it also captures the brutal reality of many tribal women's life in India. These women experience many forms of oppression, such as violence, landlessness, poverty, and discrimination. The underprivileged and marginalized segments of society were given a voice by Mahasweta Devi's portrayal of Dopdi's character. Several social activists, artists, and writers found inspiration in Dopdi's persona. Her tale has been transformed into plays, movies, and other kinds of media, reaching a wider audience and assisting in the dissemination of knowledge about the difficulties encountered by tribal women. In conclusion, Dopdi's presence in Mahasweta Devi's book and the following adaptations of her tale has significantly contributed to bringing attention to the difficulties and tenacity of Indian tribal women. Dopdi's persona stands for the struggle for freedom against oppression, and her life's work continues to encourage and inspire others to fight for equality and justice.

### **To study the character of Dopdi as a 'Warrior without a Weapon in Hand'**

Mahasweta Devi is a prominent author on feminism in India. She has long embellished feminist writings. She mainly promoted the freedom and empowerment of Bengal's tribal people in her work. Her characters almost invariably struggle against exploitation, especially sexual assault and abuse, and she has always campaigned as a social crusader to raise the poor class. Devi yelled in rage at the injustice and corruption of the affluent. She illustrated the Indian patriarchal system in her article. Agnigarbha Devi's preface states that "Life is not mathematics and people are not made for the purpose of politics." I

don't believe in simple party politics and I want to improve the social structure that exists now.

Dopdi, a 27-year-old tribal woman, is characterised as a "notorious female, long sought in many" (Draupadi P395) as she battles for her life by acquiring food and water. She is a member of the Santhal tribe and is trying to escape the special forces after killing Surja Sahu and his child and settling in upper-caste wells and tube wells during the drought. In order to put an end to the tribal people's revolt against the caste and feudal systems, army men have been dispatched to the Jharkhani jungle.

Throughout history, women have been subjected to exploitation, humiliation, and being seen as sexual objects. After being brought into jail, Dopdi Mejhen is only seen as a body. As soon as the cops take her into custody, the process of commodification has started. "Mr. Senanayak, the elderly Bengali specialist in combat and extreme-Left politics" (Draupadi P393) gives orders before departing for supper and adds, "Make her do the necessary" (Draupadi P401).

After that, a bunch of police officers rape Dopdi. She feels humiliated as a tear from the corner of her eye, she "trickles" (Draupadi 401) as she witnesses her breasts being chewed raw and having her nipples pulled. The number? Draupadi had left the room at four, five, six, and seven. To get her to identify her allies, the police gang-raped her. She is treated like an item and is deeply ashamed, yet she has an unbreakable spirit. Wilson observes, Refusing to conceal herself, she lashes out against the guy who authorised the group rape on her by using her battered body as a weapon.

The patriarchy oppresses and tortures the Dopdi tribe. However, tribal Dopdi is shown as a very strong and commanding figure. Despite facing so much discrimination, she maintains her resolve and strength. Senanayak is very terrified to approach an unarmed target for the first time. (Draupadi 402). This remark emphasizes how a dominating guy must ultimately feel inferior to a female. The sounds of a male power structure are weakened by Dopdi's voice. Since ancient times, the powerful man has attempted to dominate and exploit the weaker. The same phenomenon occurs throughout Devi's writings. The males in authority violently exploit women in Indian culture. She felt something sticky beneath her arms and around her waist after Dopdi was captured, and her arms and legs were still tethered to four posts. The only thing gone is the humour (Draupadi 401).

Devi is able to illustrate how the Dopdi changed from being an oppressed people to outraged rebels. She dispenses the water that the guard hands her onto the ground. She bites a piece of fabric while

tears fall down it. Senanayak emerges in shock to discover Draupadi strolling towards him in the direct sunshine while nude (Draupadi P402). She had such courage that she "stands before him, naked." Blood-stained hair on the thighs and the pubis. two wounds and two breasts (Draupadi 402). Dopdi does not suffer in quiet, in contrast to other passive rape victims. Marginalized Dopdi confronts her rapist with a resolute and unbreakable attitude. Dopdi is portrayed by Devi as a highly tenacious heroine who stands up to the injustice committed by the higher-class guys. She overcomes her suffering and tyranny and becomes a very strong "subject." Devi reveals the patriarchal system in which Dopdi came to represent the millions of tribal women who are subjugated, marginalized, and degraded by political forces. She challenges the authorities to behold the atrocity committed by them and states What use do garments serve? You can take my clothes off, but how will you dress me again? A guy, are you? Not one of the men here makes me feel embarrassed. (Draupadi 402).

What Spivak means when he talks about a gendered subaltern is exactly what Devi's portrayal of Dopdi conveys. By replacing the mythical princess Draupadi with the rebel clan Dopdi, Devi is able to voice ideas and thoughts that would otherwise go undetected and unacknowledged. Devi opposes the myth of the lesser female body in Hinduism, which is never challenged and is only ever used for profit. For instance, Goddess Durga, who is said to as "a good wife" in her form as Sati, commits suicide by setting herself on fire because she is distressed by her father's treatment of her husband, Lord Shiva. Out of rage, Lord Shiva carries Sati's body and dances throughout the world. Then Lord Vishnu separates her body into bits and disperses them over the universe. Every piece of Sati's body turns becomes a place of worship. The Mahabharata also includes Draupadi's marriage to all the Pandavas and her revirginization as instances of female bodily abuse. Due to what happens to their bodies, patriarchal voices in both the stories of Durga and Draupadi deny women agency. You can see the subaltern identity in relation to the police officers and Officer Senanayek, who function as representations of the hegemonic structures. Dopdi's body thus becomes a site of authoritarian control as well as gendered resistance.

Thanks to the assistance of another man, Arijit, who implores her to rescue her comrades rather than herself, Dopdi is able to survive the anguish of being raped by numerous men. She speaks to the police with sincerity, but the attack on her body makes it difficult for him to be heard. Her refusal



to wear clothing undermines phallogocentric domination, and the exploitation of her body gives her the ability to oppose the hegemonic patriarchy of the police officers. Devi demonstrates how the primary goals of every conflict or struggle are male assaults on women's bodies. In the Naxalite movement and the Bangladesh Liberation war, torture occurs to both men and women, but it is even more severe for women since they also endure sexual abuse. Devi represents the gendered subaltern subject who lives on the outskirts of society and dared to oppose the existing patriarchal structures in accordance with Spivak's views on the subaltern. The subaltern cannot be represented; they can only be represented, according to Spivak, who has raised concern about how they are portrayed in the dominant discourse. Devi's use of polyphony, however, addresses the politics around the term "subaltern" as addition to re-presenting the subaltern. Devi presents Draupadi as a strong woman who challenges societal conventions and sexual expectations despite being abused and shunned. Dopdi changes the physiology of her body from one of powerlessness to one of fierce resistance. She presents Dopdi honestly by utilising clear words and deep emotions, as opposed to romanticising the indigenous woman. Draupadi claims that women may struggle against the social and political objectification of their bodies and put a stop to injustice by using their bodies as a resource.

To conclude, Dopdi is a fierce warrior from the Santhal tribe who opposes the repressive elements of the Indian government. She is a powerful warrior who, in the absence of a weapon, uses her cunning, bravery, and creativity to protect her village and herself. Her will to fight against injustice despite the odds being stacked against her characterizes her. She is a leader who motivates others to join her in the fight for independence, and others look up to her because of her charm and fortitude. Her resistance to being categorized by her gender is one of the things that stand out about her the most. She lives in a patriarchal culture, yet despite this, she is willing to fight alongside males and assume the role of a warrior. She also doesn't hesitate to defy social expectations, as seen by the time she opted to wed the person she loved rather than the guy her family had picked for her. Dopdi exhibits her bravery and wit in a variety of ways throughout the narrative. She deceives the police officers trying to apprehend her, for instance, by posing as a prostitute before killing one of them with her bare hands. She demonstrates her bravery by keeping up the fight even though she is aware that she will probably be tortured and killed. Dopdi is a strong and empowering character who

epitomizes the tenacity and fortitude of the Santhal people. She is a genuine warrior without a weapon because of her willingness to stand up for what is right in the face of insurmountable obstacles.

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