

***Draupadi*: Revisiting the Past through the Lens of the Gendered Subaltern**

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Abstract

In giving voice to the tribal's quest for human rights, recognizing their place as some of the most economically and politically marginalized people in India, Mahashweta Devi's name acquires a special place. Having sympathetically observed the tribes' day-to-day existence, value system, repeated exploitation at the hands of others and the state machinery, she has tried to feel their pangs in every sphere of life from the innermost core of her sensibilities. Devi's short story, namely, *Draupadi* stands as a typical example where the paleonymy of the mythical heroine from *The Mahabharata* is employed for the 'strategic necessity' for exploring the nuances of the Naxalite movement and its close communion with the question of tribal-rights during the historical phase from 1967 to 1971 in West Bengal and India. It is one such text which has consciously attempted the relocation of the epical myth by reading against the grain and supplanting it with the modern context revealing numerous layers of structurization in relation to socio-politico-cultural ideologies. In my proposed paper, I wish to explore how the narrative of 'Draupadi / Dopdi' gathers contemporaneity and complexity while placed against the protagonist's existence as a tribal-subaltern-peasant-rebel and becomes a pronouncement of the mobilization of that rebellious consciousness that turns indistinguishable from the emergence of her 'gendered subaltern' ethnic self.

Keywords: Class, Race, Resistance of the Subaltern, Voices of the Marginalized, Myth.