

Name DOPDI MEJHEN, age twenty-seven, husband Dulna Majhi (deceased), domicile cherakhan, Bankraharh, information whether dead or alive and / or assistance in arrest, one hundred rupees..(19)

The female protagonist, Draupadi, who is a tribal insurgent, gets captured during her outrageous tribal uprisings against the government. After her capture, she is beguiled for giving information about her companions. Because of her dedication, she is subjected to third degree in police custody; till the government officer “Senanayak” gives orders to “Make her. Do the needful,” (34). She is brutally subjected to gang-rape through the endless silent suffering night. After this barbaric act of violating the female honour Draupadi proceeds daringly towards “Senanayak” and, she confronts her exploiters naked and bleeding, thereby making the rapists shameful of how to face this unexpected situation, and the reader distressed and sorry for their cruelty.

Dopdi and Dulna Majhi are representatives of her native community, who are forced to serve their masters and get petty wages. Forced by circumstances, they decide to rise against this oppression imposed on them by men in power. Therefore, through Draupadi’s story, Devi reveals the cold-heartedness of upper-class feudal lords. Draupadi recollects the episode of “Operation Bakuli”, she remembers: “Surja Sahu arranged with Biddibabu to dig two tubewells and three wells within the compound of his two houses. No water anywhere, draught in Birbhum. Unlimited water at Surja Sahu’s house, as clear as crow’s eye” (29). These tribal poor people, even have no right to drink water, to satisfy their thirst. So, against these cruelties, that Draupadi and her group take law in their hands:

Surja Sahu’s house was surrounded at night. Surja was tied up with cow rope. His whitish eyeballs turned and turned, he was incontinent again and again. Dulma had said, I’ll have the first blow, brothers. My great-grandfather took a bit of paddy from him, and I still give him free labor to repay that debt. Dopdi had said, his mouth watered when he looked at me. I’ll put out his eyes. (30)

The above mentioned incident is thought-provoking. It shows the embodiment of woman’s body as a victim of male gaze, particularly, the tribal woman’s body, who is, very easily believed as an easy prey by the non-tribal men. Though the story is about the exploitation of the tribes, but it predominantly focuses on the oppression of woman through the flouting of their bodies, especially tribal women who repay the price of raising their voice (5). “Your sex is a terrible wound,” says Draupadi (28). The most important question that this text poses is not only why Dopdi was raped, but it also analyses why women fall as an easy prey to be raped? Through this story, the author challenge the “commodification” and “subsequent victimization” of a woman’s body.

Devi’s Draupadi challenges the prevalent ideas regarding rape that is, she in her nudity destroys the connivance of silence surrounding rape, and in doing so, she reverses the notions of the kind whereby the victim and not the victimizer should be afraid and guilt ridden. Realistically, “unlike diku women, Santhali women are not ashamed of being women nor they afraid of their sexuality ” so, the writer through her Santhal female protagonist, Draupadi hammers home the point that it is not the woman, who is wronged, should be ashamed (Kumar 140). With this awareness, Draupadi redirects the disgrace and dismay towards Senanayak and his officers. When Senanayak sees wounded Draupadi, he loses his calm temper and asks instantly, “What is this. He is about to cry, but stops”. Draupadi comes near to him and says “The object of your search, Dopdi Mejhen. You asked them to make me up, don’t you want to see how they made me?” He becomes dumb-founded in both body and brain, he asks again “where are her clothes? Won’t put them on, sir. Tearing them”. Draupadi, now, has nothing to