

Volumes. 96 (2023)

(New Series)

ISSN: 0972- 56



**JOURNAL
OF THE
ASIATIC SOCIETY OF MUMBAI**
(A UGC - CARE Listed Journal)

Editors

Parineeta Deshpande

Ambarish Khare

Published by

The Asiatic Society of Mumbai

Town Hall, Mumbai - 400 001.

Maharashtra State (INDIA)

KUNTI AN IDEAL HEROINE IN THE MAHABHARATA

Dr. Sandhya B. Nair, Assistant Professor, Department Of Sanskrit, N.S.S College, Pandalam :
Sandhyaskt123@gmail.com

Introduction

The Mahabharata enjoys a very unique place as the longest literary work in the world, consisting of one lakh verses. As available now, it is encyclopaedic in character. The epic itself declares that whatever is found in it can be seen elsewhere and whatever is not in it, cannot be found elsewhere.

The Mahabharata is an Itihasa in the sense of archetypal or Sanatana history. It is a poem which expresses a vision of the struggle and destiny of man in terms of a mythopoetic and demiurgic creativity. It is a work of authority, that is, a sastra embodying an ancient tradition of wisdom. The whole work is cast in the form of unforgettable images of scenes and persons.

The Mahabharata discusses various concepts on the political, economic, philosophical and ethical life of ancient India. So, the Mahabharata is known as the encyclopaedia of moral teaching which gives great emphasis on righteousness. That is, the epic attaches great importance to ethical virtues. The fact that the world-famous work, The Bhagavat Gita, which is one of the fundamental texts of Vedanta and represents the Indian Darshana, comes in the Mahabharata shows the importance of the epic. This Itihasa which is more than an Itihasa showing its influence in the general life and socio-political systems, can be considered as a representation of the history of its time. This great epic, composed in different ages, presents conflicting views on woman. The woman characters in the Mahabharata express the power of Dharma in the form of their patience, steadfastness and sincerity. Kunti, one of the prominent female characters in the Mahabharata, is given more story space than any other heroine, considering her role in the development of the plot.

Kunti in Mahabharata

Kunti is one of the most significant female characters in the Mahabharata. When we go through the ancient epics and classics. We realize that, there is no other mother who had an immense love and affection towards her children as Kunti of the Mahabharata. Her entire life was dedicated to the fulfillment of dharma. She was not only the beloved and obedient wife of Pandu, but also a good mother and she had due consideration for her children. Kunti is one of the strong-willed women of the great epic. 'Kunti' the foremost female character is influential in controlling the twists and turn of the basic story of the ever great epic Mahabharata.

Kunti as a dutiful daughter

Kunti was born to Surasena, grandfather of Lord Srikrishna. her real name was Pritha. She belonged to the yadava dynasty. Kind Kuntibhoja, the nephew of Surasena had no offspring. As per the word given to him by Surasena, Pritha his first-born daughter was given to Kuntibhoja. Pritha had lost her name too.

Kuntibhoja was the foster - father of Kunti. But it can be realized from his words that he trusted Kunti more than his own issue. When sage Durvasas expressed his desire to stay there at the palace of Kuntibhoja, he entrusted the duty of serving him to Kunti, his elegant foster-child. His learned daughter Pritha (Kunti's earlier name), who was intelligent, good mannered and illustrious, would attend him with reverence and respect and with no defiance or reproach. When a father says this much so confidently about his own daughter, the sage could fathom his firm faith and trust in her.

Here, Kuntibhoja built his total trust upon his daughter alone, upon realizing that any sort of rage that may come from the Brahmin (Durvasas is well known for his sudden outburst of anger) would be able to destroy his entire race. To the best of her ability, Kunti proved true to her father's trust through her diligence and dutifulness. Kunti quite evidently established her righteousness as a worthy daughter by undertaking that difficult task with determination and by accomplishing the same successfully, even in her childhood itself.