

# A Comparative discussion between Sītā and Draupadī

Indrajit Pramanik

Research Scholar

Sanskrit

Visva Bharati University, Santiniketan, West Bengal

Sita and Draupadi are the two great heroine characters from the epics of India, namely the Ramayana and Mahabharata respectively. King Janaka was the father of Sita. On the other hand king Drupada was the father of Draupadi. A Comparison of these two legendary female Characters reveals to us much about human personality as it does about human society. Both women play vital roles in honor bound times and both have to endure a specific level of challenge in different position. Sita must battle through the elements in being Lord Rama's wife while Draupadi finds challenges in being married to the five pandavas.

Both of them are also considered to be avatars of Hindu divinity. Sita is an avatar of Goddess Lakshmi and Draupadi is an avatar of Goddess Parvati. Both Sita and Draupadi were princesses. Both had unnatural or supernatural births. While Sita was born from earth and Draupadi was born from fire. King Janaka (King of Videha ) found Sita accidentally while he was ploughing a field and decided to adopt her.

*"atha me krsatah Ksetramlang aladutthita tatah "<sup>1</sup>  
"ksetram sodhayata labdha namna siteti visruta "<sup>2</sup>*

On the other hand Draupadi was born from the fire of a yajna, a sacrificial rite that Drupada had performed in his prayers for a child.

*"Kumari capi pancali vedimadhyat samutthita  
subhaga darsaniyangi svasitayatalocana "<sup>3</sup>*

Sita had a Childhood as she was born an infant where as Draupadi was born as an adult. Both Sita and Draupadi's mothers played little or no role in their upbringing. They are always addressed as their father's daughters like Janaka's Janaki and Drupada's Draupadi. Sita was raised with love, care and attention but since Draupadi was made to destroy a family , She was raised in hatred.

*"asya hetoh kauravanam mahadutpatsyate bhayam "<sup>4</sup>*

Both Sita and Draupadi are trophies in an archery contest. Rama married Sita after breaking the bow of Shiva in a *svayamvara*. Announced by king Janaka

*"tesam varayatam kanyam sarvesam prthiviksitam "<sup>5</sup>  
"viryasulketi bhagavanna dadami sutamahem "<sup>6</sup>*

On the other hand, Arjuna strikes the eye of a fish rotating on a wheel hanging from the ceiling to win Draupadi's hand. Announced by Dhrstadyumna-

*"etanmahat karma karoti yo vai kulena rupena valena yuktata  
ta syadya bharyya bhagini mameyam krsna bhavitri na mrsa vrvimi "<sup>7</sup>*

Sita's sister and cousins are given in marriage to Ram's brothers. On other hand, Draupadi is shared by Arjuna's four brothers. Thus Sita experiences monogamy, and Draupadi experiences polygamy. Yudhisthira promised –

*"sarvesam draupadi bharyya bhavisyati hi nah subha "<sup>8</sup>*

Both Sita and Draupadi went to Jungle with their husband. Sita accompanied her husband Rama to the forest for fourteen years. On the other hand Draupadi too accompanied the pandavas to the forest for twelve years and one year of inognito. Sita was abducted by Ravana where as draupadi was insulted by Duryodhana and Duhsasana in the court of king Dhrtarastra and molested by Jayadratha.

Both Sita and Draupadi were included among the chaste women of India. Both of them were known for their purity of mind and body. When Lord Rama rescued Sita he forces her to prove her chastity by undergoing a trail by fire<sup>9</sup> to maintain his family honour. Where as Draupadi never had to prove her purity to anyone.

Lava and Kusa were born to Sita. On the other hand five sons called Upapandavas ( Prativindhya, Satanika, Srutasoma, Srutapakirti and Srutakarma) were born to Draupadi.

Both Sita and Draupadi were educated. Sita must have obtained at her father's house a grounding in vedic mantras and in a queen's duties towards a state (*rajadharmā*)<sup>10</sup>. After twelve years of *asrama* residence, Sita could pride her self on being a *pandita* a learned lady. On the other hand Draupadi was also a learned lady. We have seen Draupadi's political Knowledge in Bharavi's '*Kiratarjjuniya*' Cant. I. For warship inspiration she told to Yudhishthira-

*"vrajanti te mudhadhiyah parabhavami.... nisita ivesavah "*<sup>11</sup>  
*" abandhya kopasya vihanturapadam .... na vidvisadarah "*<sup>12</sup>

Both sita and Draupadi are enshrined as Goddesses Sita is a more familiar Sight in temples. She is the graceful lakshmi, with out whom Rama is never worshipped. Draupadi worship is popular in some parts of India as in North Tamil Nadu. There she is Amman , the mother - goddess ,worshipeed alone without any of her husband the fearsome kali who dirnks blood of her abusers.

Draupadi is one such women who while doing all her rightful duties is willing and bold enough to take a stand .Draupadi actually declared a war<sup>13</sup> with the kauravas long before it really happened in the battlefield of *Kuruksetra*.

It is interesting that sita has become the role model of most Indian Women. Draupadi is an interesting story but she never really becomes a role model.

Sita is not a threat. She seats in the garden of Ravana and waits for Rama to come. She does not declare any war. She utters no threat to Ravana. Rama asks to sit in fire, she goes in, he asks her to leave the house and she obliges. Everyone wants his wife to behave like Sita. To quote Swami Vivekananda in this context: " She is the very type of the true Indian Women , for all the Indian ideals of a perfected women have grown out of that one life of Sita"<sup>14</sup> In the words of Ramesh Chandra Majumdar : "The status of women suffered a considerable decline on account of the views and ideals preached in the later smritis and through a re adjustment the role of wife became the ideal"<sup>15</sup>

On the other hand Draupadi does not give the same comfort zone. She is married to five brothers. She takes a stand when she is threatened .She declares a one sided war. She is not so predictable.

We Should not compare great men or women. Sita lived in the Treta yuga, where as Draupadi lived in the Dwapara yuga. But it is interesting to note that modern writers tend to project Sita more as a silent suffering victim and Draupadi more as a outspoken demanding heroine while traditional story tellers saw Sita as a person full of love,wisdom and patience and Draupadi as a glamorous intimidating diva. What everyone agrees with is that there can be no two characters more different from each other.

## **REFERENCES :**

1. *Ramayana*, I. 66.13.
2. *Ibid.*, I. 66.14.
3. *Mahabharata* , I. 166.44.
4. *Ibid.*, I. 160.49.
5. *Ramayana*, I. 66.16.
6. *Ibid.*, I. 66.17.
7. *Mahabharata*, I. 184.36.
8. *Ibid.*, I. 190.16.
9. *Ramayana*, VI. 116.25-28.
10. *Ibid.*, II. 26.4.
11. *Kiratarjjuniya* (Cant.1) - Sloka -30
12. *Ibid.*, Sloka- 33
13. *Mahabharata* , II . 69.7.
14. *The Complete works of Swami Vivekananda*, 9 vols ( Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1-8,1989; 9, 1997) 3.255.
15. *Great women of India: The Holy Mother Birth Centenary Memorial*,ed.Swami Madhavana and Ramesh Chandra Majumdar. Page No. 24-25.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Altekar, A.S. *The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization*. Varanasi : 1956 (2nd ed.).

Anuragi ,A . *Mahabharata Ki Kahaniyan* (Hindi). Joypur: Agrabal Publishing house . 2010 (Ist ed.).

Badrinath ,C.*The Women of the Mahabharata*. New Delhi: Orient Longman private Ltd. 2008 (Ist ed.).

Bharavi. *Kiratarjuniya* (Cant. -I )Ed. Anil Chandra Basu. Kolkata : Sanskrit Book Depot . 2000 (2nd ed.).Bhattachary, S. *Ramayanera caritavali* (Bengali).Calcutta: Ananda dhara Prakashan.1969

Chatterjee, S.K. *The Ramayana , Its Character , genius history, expansion,exodus: a resume*. Calcutta. 1978(Ist ed.).Gore, N.A. *A Bibliography of the Ramayana*.Poona. 1943.

Majumdar ,R.C. & S. Madhavana. *Great Women of India*. Calcutta : Advaita Ashrama. 1993.

Rao, S.R. *The Mahabharata*. New Delhi : Oriented Longman Ltd. 1992 (Ist ed.).Sarkar, A. *A study on the Ramayana*. Calcutta : Rddhi India . 1987 (Ist ed.)

Sharma, Y. *Srestha Pauranika Nariyan* (Hindi). Delhi: Sunil Sahitya Sadan. 2001(Ist ed.).

Stulley, M. & J. Sundaracharya .*Studies in the Ramayana Women Characters*.Madras. 1945.(Ist ed.).

**Internet Sources**

<https://devdutt.com/articles/indian-mythology/sita-versus-draupadi.htm> | Sita versus Draupadi | Devdutt

<https://www.dollsofindia.com/library/sita-draupadi/> |Sita and Draupadi - the Two Great Icons for Womanhood - Dolls of India

<https://www.differencebetween.com/difference-between-sita-and-vs-draupadi/> | Difference Between sita and Draupadi

<https://www.dailyo.in/arts/sita-draupadi-ramayana-mahabharata.../1/29458.html>  
Hazra,Saonli.:``Sita and Draupadi: What their similarities and differences tell us DailyO ``

<https://www.enotes.com> › Homework Help › Indian Drama | Kannan, Ashley : ``Compare and contrast Sita and Draupadi. | eNotes``

<https://www.speakingtree.in> ./Sharma, Richa.: `` Sita, Draupadi and today's women! - Speaking Tree``

<https://www.speakingtree.in> › Blogs | Draupadi: A role model for modern women - Speaking Tree.