

THE CAUSES OF WOMEN'S STRUGGLE REFLECTED IN DIVAKARUNI'S *THE PALACE OF ILLUSIONS*

¹Senly Darryl Augie*, ²Siti Hanifa

^{1,2}Universitas Trunojoyo Madura

¹senlydrgie@gmail.com*, ²hanifa@trunojoyo.ac.id

Abstract

Gender equality among men and women has been achieved in various countries during the last decades as the campaign for women's rights has evolved. This study aims to examine the causes of Amba and Draupadi's struggle in Divakaruni's *The Palace of Illusions* using Naomi Wolf's power feminism theory. This study conducts qualitative method to analyze women's issues through characters' utterances and the narrator's narration. The results of this study are Amba struggle because of the restriction to control her own life and the lack of equity in her dignity and self-esteem. Meanwhile Draupadi struggles because of limitation of her expressions and the lack of equity in her education, dignity, and self-esteem.

Keywords: *gender, equality, power feminism, women's struggle*

INTRODUCTION

Gender inequalities exist everywhere and at all stages of life, beginning in childhood and even before birth. The assumptions about gender have been properly utilized to defend inequities that still exist today, such as rejecting women equal opportunities for decision-making and leadership places whether it is in the political system, academia, or in the business sphere, compensating men more than women for performing the identical work, and compelling women that they are not suitable for occupations in fields such as engineering and mathematics (Tyson, 2015). The statement emphasizes how cultural beliefs about gender have been used to explain persisting inequality. Women continue to face challenges in decision-making and leadership responsibilities, a gender pay disparity with men in comparable professions earning more, and disincentive from pursuing careers in sectors due to established gender stereotypes.

Gender influences a person's life experience. It occurs because people genuinely think that women are not required to perform activities that men perform simply as women are stereotyped as having frailer physical bodies than men. Furthermore, in a patriarchal society, women's roles are limited to staying at home and caring for the family while their husband is at work. Women

are not permitted to make decisions because men are thought to be more intelligent and responsible for the household (Saputri, 2018).

There are still phenomena where patriarchal culture is still practiced in some countries. India is one of the countries which still practices patriarchal culture. Indian civilization, like many other 'traditional' societies, is still patriarchal (Sivakumar & Manimekalai, 2021). Men are supposed to be the wage earner of the household, while women are obligated to do housework and maintenance for children. This manifests in how boys and girls are raised, with boys given greater independence and autonomy and girls encouraged to be willing and obey regulations. Sivakumar and Manimekalai (2021) emphasize that women are instructed not to avoid speaking out against prejudice, subjugation, exploitation, and subordination throughout all stages of the structure. These standards prevent women from pursuing goals other than marriage. Similarly, gender standards for males are built around masculinity, and a man's perception of self is based on his capacity to navigate women. Until the girl marries, her father's pride and manhood are reflected in her protection and virginity. These gender stereotypes are rooted in Indian culture and are passed down from generation to generation.

Feminist theory is a key aspect of sociology. It is an ensemble of structural conflict theories that view disputes among men and women as the source of a variety of societal issues. Feminist critique examines how literary works (and additional cultural products) promote the social, political, economic, and psychological subordination of women (Tyson, 2015). Men who create literature tend to portray stereotypes of women as wives, obedient mothers, good family, and domineering partners. Feminist denotes a social revolution that strives to achieve gender equality in economic, educational, personal, and social settings.

Power feminism used in this study seeks greater equality for women. Its ideology is both adaptable and inclusive (Wolf, 1994). Power feminism acknowledges that the difficulties women encounter is diverse that they require flexible and dynamic solutions. This strategy promotes women to cooperate with political and economic systems in order to affect change from beneath, with the premise that women can influence these structures to better reflect their interests. However, advocates of power feminism think that by concentrating on personal empowerment, women can build a more equal society to benefit themselves and subsequent generations.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni uses the situation in India to construct a novel retelling an epic narrative of ancient Hindu history. *The Palace of Illusions* is a novel about Mahabharata, published in 2008 by Doubleday. The author uses Draupadi's point of view to narrate the story. The novel depicts the life of Princess Draupadi, from her birth in the fire to the occurrence of the greatest war called Mahabharata. The writer chooses Divakaruni's *The Palace of Illusions* to be analyzed because the story comes from Indian epic which is well known. Furthermore, gender issues especially issue that experiences by women still exist in some countries. Women are viewed negatively in society as a result of gender inequality. As a result, women lose their right to gender equality.

The initial researchers that analyzed *The Palace of Illusions* novel mostly concentrated on feminism topics. Previous researchers have explored various aspects of feminism and used feminism approach. Sharma (2023) analyzed the novel using Robin Lakoff and Deborah Tannen's theory to examine conversational style, polysemous meanings of linguistic strategies, and the usage of sexist terminology. S et al. (2022) analyzed the concept of "New Woman" using Dennis Shoesmith's theory. Sulistyo (2021) analyzed the novel using male feminism approach. Hema (2021) highlighted Draupadi's passions and desires using Spivak's feminism theory. Zubair et al. (2021) analyzed Draupadi's vital position using Chandra Talpade Mohanty and Uma Narayan's feminism theory. Yet, none of them investigates using Naomi Wolf's power feminism theory. Thus, in this study, the writer examines the causes of female characters' struggle, particularly Amba and Draupadi's, reflected in Divakaruni's *The Palace of Illusions* using Naomi Wolf's theory.

METHOD

This study applies qualitative method to analyze the data. Creswell & Creswell (2018) states that qualitative research is an approach to investigate and comprehend the value that individuals or groups attributed to a human or social issue. The data of this study are the characters' utterances and the narrator's narration in the novel *The Palace of Illusions* written by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. The instrument of this research is the writer herself. Meanwhile, there are processes for analyzing the data in this study as follows: 1) The writer prepared the data to be analyzed. 2) Then, she read the source of data repeatedly to deepen understanding of the issue in

the novel. 3) The next step, the writer coded all of the data by categorizing the data related to the issue. 4) The writer rendered information about the characters and plot in the novel which showed women issues and supported feminism theory. 5) Lastly, the writer employed a narrative section to present the findings of the analysis and drew the conclusion based on the data from the novel entitled *The Palace of Illusions* which is analyzed using Naomi Wolf's feminism theory.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Research Findings

It was found that female characters of *The Palace of Illusions* novel struggle for their equal right because of (1) restriction of controlling women's own lives, (2) limitation of women's expressions, (3) the lack of equity in education, and (4) the lack of equity in women's dignity and self-esteem.

1. Restriction of Controlling Women's Own Lives

Women should be capable of making their own judgments about their lives without fear of prejudice, and society should encourage and safeguard these rights. The belief that women deserve the authority to manage their own lives is a central element of power feminism. This involves authority over their bodies, choices, and fate (Wolf, 1994).

The garland for Salva was in my hands when Bheeshma descended on us like a plague. He forced the three of us onto his chariot and took us, terrified, to Hastinapur, to marry us to his younger brother.

(Divakaruni, 2008, p. 48)

In India, a girl used to be paired with various individuals who became her future spouse through a custom. In this case, Amba was paired with various individuals who became her future spouse while she was a girl. Bheeshma, a great warrior from Hastinapur kingdom, has won the swayamvar and will take Amba to be his younger brother's wife without considering what she needs first. This act implies that Amba lacks the authority to make decisions regarding her own life, particularly when it comes to selecting a life partner. The use of terms like "forced" suggests a lack of agreement to Amba's intentions for the marriage. Instead of being free to marry anyone she prefers, Amba is bound by the outcome of the swayamvar.

2. Limitation of Women's Expressions

As women's experiences are considered important, voicing their experiences is also a right that women should have. In a country that still follows a patriarchal system, such as India, women's voices are often suppressed.

..... *"Nothing can make up for the palace that I lost because of your folly."*

..... *The others looked at me reproachfully, and even Dhri pulled me aside later to say that I should guard my tongue.*

(Divakaruni, 2008, p. 205)

The passage above describes when Draupadi and her husbands, Pandavas, have their meal in the midday. Draupadi was married to five men, called Pandava, at once. Yudhistir, her oldest husband, says that all of them enjoy living in the forest as comfortable as in the palace. Due to Yudhistir's foolishness, who continued to bet even knowing he was being manipulated by Duryodhan, the palace that Draupadi once dreamed of has reverted to Duryodhan. As a result of losing their property and shelter, they must survive in the nature.

In the data provided above, Yudhistir's displeasure and departure follows Draupadi's sentiments of regret and dissatisfaction with the lost palace. This event highlights how women are frequently restricted from freely expressing their ideas. Yudhistir's departure, as well as the reproachful stares from others, underscore the reactions of others to women who dare to voice their unhappiness publicly. Dhri's warning to Draupadi to control her mouth shows that these constraints not only limit Draupadi's autonomy, but also represent wider social standards dictating how women should act. It is in line with Wolf's (1994) statement that women are never suggested to disclose their rights to power or money.

3. The Lack of Equity in Education

Draupadi, the main character of the story, is rejected to receive the same education as her brother. This disparity in educational opportunities is rooted in ingrained patriarchal structures.

".....Will she be sitting behind you in your chariot in battle when you need to remember these important precepts? Perhaps it is best if she no longer joins us during your studies."

(Divakaruni, 2008, p. 23)

In Draupadi's case, she is not given the same educational opportunities as her brother, Dhristadyumna. When Dhristadyumna is in a learning process, Draupadi gives her attention to the tutor. She wants to learn something like her brother does. However, the tutor says that a woman is not permitted to join the learning activity because a woman cannot help men when they are in a battlefield because she is a woman. This section demonstrates the presence of a gender gap in access to education. It is consistent with the notion that women face difficulties gaining the same level of education as men. In addition, this rejection is a result of patriarchal norms that limit women's access to education. The line "perhaps it is best if she no longer joins us during your studies" hints that the princess' attendance during the prince's learning is wrong in some way.

This statement implies that Draupadi's presence in her brother's learning activity is considered inappropriate simply because she is a woman. This represents gender prejudices that restrict the participation of women in learning experiences. Wolf's principles resonate with this situation, as it highlights the injustice towards women who are denied higher education simply because of their gender. Draupadi's lack of education, as exemplified in this passage, is a direct result of patriarchal structures and gender bias which limits women's access to resources, including education.

Traditions about gender roles have long been upheld in society, with males supposed to be the breadwinners and decision makers, meanwhile women supposed to take care of the home and children. Women's educational opportunities are frequently disadvantaged by these responsibilities. Also, girls are viewed as prospective partners who may join another family. Thus, women find it challenging to obtain education as a result of these gender norms.

4. The Lack of Equity in Women's Dignity and Self-Esteem

In the novel *The Palace of Illusions* written by Divakaruni, the characters Draupadi and Amba reflect the lack of equality in the dignity and self-esteem of women in the story. These two female characters live in a world filled with patriarchal norms and oppressive societal structures that continually undermine their value and self-worth. Those are discussed further below.

"He did. And lost them. Then he wagered himself and lost again. The luck of the demons was with that vulture Sakuni. And then Duryodhan said, I'll wager everything I've won from you in one final game, against Draupadi."

(Divakaruni, 2008, p. 190)

The data above presents when Yudhistir play gambling with Duryodhan and he lost everything he has. Then, in the end, Duryodhan asked Yudhistir to use Draupadi as betting material. Female characters, particularly Draupadi in this case, endure oppressive treatment that lowers their self-esteem. Yudhistir's gambling with Duryodhan leads to the loss of all his possessions. Duryodhan, who think he had the right to grab anything the Pandavas possess, advocates wagering Draupadi herself in the ultimate bet. The use of Draupadi as a negotiating weapon exemplifies the objectification of women that is inherent in patriarchal societies. The situation depicts the harsh use of women as objects to be subjugated to men's desires. This is also supported by another evidence below.

..... *"Remove the Pandavas' fancy clothes and jewelry. All of that belongs to us now!"*

.....*Karna watched the glittering mass on the floor intently, as though it could tell him a secret; his mouth stretched in a mirthless smile. "Why should Draupadi be treated any differently? Take her clothes, too."*

(Divakaruni, 2008, p. 192)

The involvement of Draupadi in this gamble serves as a reminder of the time when women's agency and dignity were disregarded. She was successfully used as a pawn in negotiations and a representation of her husband's wealth. This conduct entirely violated her voice, permission, and dignity, illuminating the pervasive gender inequality in the culture at the time. Wolf (1994) states that rape, sexual assault, and exploitation are all utilized to maintain female inequality. Duryodhan cherishes in his victory and directs Dussasan to rob the Pandavas of their expensive clothing and jewelry, claiming them as treasures of battle. Karna requests that Draupadi be treated the same as everyone else and that her clothing be taken away as well. Afterwards, Dussasan tries to undress Draupadi, which is an offensive violation of her dignity and privacy. In this context, the evidence presented above demonstrates that women's agency is weakened and their dignity is frequently ignored.

Furthermore, when she implies that she needs help, she does not get the security she should get from the powerful people around her. Despite her expressions of grief, the powerful people around her refuse to give the security and help she desperately required. This lack of security shows not just women's physical vulnerability in such situations, but also the system's inability to

recognize and eliminate discrimination based on gender that have become deeply rooted in the society of the time. Another violation that Draupadi experiences are explained as follows.

.....Not even Duryodhan had dared to look at me quite like this in his sabha, for he'd known I was a queen. Is this how men looked at ordinary women, then? Women they considered their inferiors?

(Divakaruni, 2008, p. 228)

In that case, Draupadi is in disguise as a consequence of losing everything in her first husband's, Yudhistir, gambling. Duryodhan, one of Kaurava princes, tells Pandavas and Draupadi to disappear for twelve years. If they were discovered, the twelve years would be repeated. Then, one day, Draupadi disguises as Queen Sudhesna's maid in the Matsya Kingdom. Keechak, the commander-in-chief of Matsya kingdom, looks at Draupadi and starts flirting.

When Keechak looks at Draupadi objectively, it shows a lack of regard for her as a person. Draupadi, who was a queen, is used to command a certain amount of respect and adoration. Yet, when she disguises herself as an "ordinary woman," or more specifically as a queen's maid, she becomes the target of objectification. As stated by Wolf (1994), most women have experienced sexual harassment at workplace. The passage that is previously cited provides the spotlight on a different part of Draupadi's life by describing how she experiences sexual harassment at work. This incident emphasizes how frequently women like Draupadi encounter gender-based abuse. Draupadi's narrative points out the issue of women not being treated with the same dignity and respect as men.

I ran then to the only refuge I could think of: Virat's sabha. Surely the king would save a helpless, abused woman. Keechak followed me there. He pushed me to the floor in full view of the court and kicked me for having spurned him. I cried out to Virat for justice, but he sat as though deaf.

(Divakaruni, 2008, p. 230)

During Draupadi's disguise as Queen Sudeshna's maid, Keechak confronts Draupadi with taking her, and if she refuses, he will press her to fulfill his desires. Draupadi asks King Virat for help, but he stays silent. Despite the torture, Draupadi's demands for justice are ignored. Virat, the king, is unable or unwilling to give justice because his power is dependent on Keechak's backing.

The narration above demonstrates how political and economic concerns that promote men's power frequently increase women's problems. On the other hand, Draupadi, as a main character of the story, is aware of the lack of dignity that she experiences. However, she does not

get the security that she needs and she should get. This idea becomes the cause of her struggle for something that she should get.

Another character that is restricted for everything she should get including self-respect is Amba. Despite her circumstances, Amba believes that she deserves to be treated with dignity, honor, and a feeling of self-worth. It can be proven by the evidence below.

The brother said, A woman who has embraced another in her heart is not chaste. I do not wish to marry her.....

.....But when I went to him, Salva said, Bheeshma has taken you by the hand. You've been contaminated by his touch. You belong to him now.

(Divakaruni, 2008, p. 48)

The narration provided before explains that as Amba attempts to express her own aspirations, she encounters painful problems. She wants to marry Salva, the one that she loves. Nonetheless, Salva fails to win the swayamvar. Therefore, Amba should follow Bheeshma since he is the one who defeats all of the contestants. Bheeshma participates in swayamvar in order to find a wife for his brother. However, Amba tells Bheeshma that she loves Salva. Then, Bheeshma brother says that he does not want to marry a girl who keeps someone in her heart. Bheeshma agrees to restore Amba to Salva without hesitation.

Yet, despite Bheeshma's guarantees that Amba will be returned to Salva, Amba's efforts to reclaim control over her life are useless. Instead of accepting her, Salva rejected her since she has been "contaminated" by Bheeshma's hands. This rejection promotes the notion that a woman's value is tightly connected to her interactions with men. Society considers that a woman's worth is defined by her virginity. The disapproval that Amba faces from both Bheeshma's brother and Salva reflects the decline of women's self-esteem. The notion that a woman's worth is measured by her contact with or touch by men highlights patriarchal norms that diminish women's self-esteem. Bheeshma's brother and Salva express doubt on her worthiness and purity. It mirrors cultural beliefs that degrade women's dignity and self-respect.

Discussion

Amba is one of the illustrations how woman is limited to control her own life. It is proven by the utterance "*The garland for Salva was in my hands when Bheeshma descended on us like a plague. He forced the three of us onto his chariot and took us, terrified, to Hastinapur, to marry*

us to his younger brother.” (Divakaruni, 2008, p. 48). In this case, Amba shows that she cannot choose her lover, Salva. Due to the swayamvar, a traditional ritual in which a woman is meant to select her future husband among a group of suitors, that her father held, Amba must be another man’s wife. As a woman, Amba is limited in the setting of the swayamvar. Bheeshma, a famous warrior from Hastinapur kingdom, has won the swayamvar and would marry Amba to his younger brother without determining what she requires. This behavior suggests that Amba lacks the power to make decisions about her own life, especially when it comes to choosing a life companion. As Wolf (1994) states that women have the right to regulate their own lives, involving control over their bodies, choices, and fate. The connection to Wolf’s argument that women have the right to control their own lives underscores the feminist viewpoint that Amba does not receive.

Furthermore, the reason why the female characters struggle is because of their right to express their experiences is limited. Draupadi, the main female character in the novel, experience the same thing. As a woman, her experience is undervalued. When Draupadi and her husbands, the Pandavas, sit down for lunch, Yudhistir, her eldest husband, remarks that they all like living in the forest as much as they do in the palace. The palace that Draupadi once dreamt of has reverted to Duryodhan as a result of Yudhistir’s folly, who persisted to gamble. As they have lost their property and sanctuary, they must rely on nature to live. Draupadi’s reply contradicts Yudhistir’s feelings. It drives her to receive criticism from her brother. It is strengthened by the words, “*The others looked at me reproachfully, and even Dhri pulled me aside later to say that I should guard my tongue.*” (Divakaruni, 2008, p. 205). Dhri’s caution to Draupadi to restrain her mouth demonstrates that these limits not only constrain Draupadi’s autonomy, but also embody broader societal standards regulating how women should behave. The significance of Draupadi’s experience is emphasized by Wolf’s (1994) claim that women are never suggested to disclose their rights to power. The prevalent societal notion believes that women should remain mute and accept their fate.

In addition, Draupadi does not get enough of things that she deserves, such as education, dignity, and self-esteem. Draupadi is limited to get the same education as her brother gets. She receives criticism for taking part in her brother Dhristadyumna’s learning, since her presence is considered improper. This shows the gender difference in educational access, reflecting the general

idea that woman, like Draupadi, suffers barriers to attaining the same level of education as men. The line, “*perhaps it is best if she no longer joins us during your studies*” (Divakaruni, 2008, p. 23) demonstrates that women do not deserve the same level of education as males since the education they get will be useless to them. Gender stereotypes have long persisted in society, with women expected to take care of the house and children. These commitments typically restrict women’s educational prospects. Wolf (1994:151) states that women should receive a greater share of the things they lack because of their gender: be it respect, dignity, access to education, safety, healthcare, representation, or financial resources. This shows that women do not get enough rights in terms of education. They are not allowed to develop themselves through adequate education. It is in contrast to men who have easier access to education.

Apart of lacking of education, Draupadi also experiences violation that indicates the lack of self-esteem and dignity that she deserves. Yudhistir, Draupadi’s husband, lost everything when he bet with Duryodhan. Duryodhan proposes a last wager that involves Draupadi herself. This emphasizes Draupadi’s oppressive treatment, causing her self-esteem to decline. Duryodhan’s acts show that Draupadi is only a bargaining tool. He celebrates his triumph after Yudhistir’s loss in a gambling match. He commands that Draupadi becomes an asset that he can possess, and Karna cruelly advises that Draupadi also be divested of her clothes. This is reflected by the line, “*Why should Draupadi be treated any differently? Take her clothes, too.*” (Divakaruni, 2008, p. 192). Another violation happens when Dussasan tries to expose the Draupadi naked in front of many audiences. Draupadi, who is used as a pawn in negotiations and represents her husband’s assets, is objectified in a horrible manner. This circumstance is in line with Wolf’s (1994) assertion that rape, sexual assault, and exploitation are frequently utilized as tactics to reinforce women’s inequality. Draupadi’s abuse exemplifies a patriarchal context that uses violence and humiliation to retain authority over women. The public rejection of women’s dignity highlights deep societal norms that allow for abuses of women’s self-esteem and dignity.

Another violation that Draupadi experiences is when she is in a workplace. When Draupadi disguises as a maid, she experiences objectification by Keechak, the royal commander of King Virat’s kingdom. It is proven by the narration, “*Is this how men looked at ordinary women, then? Women they considered their inferiors?*” (Divakaruni, 2008, p. 228). It highlights the universal

problem of women not being treated with dignity and respect in society. Keechak, who sees her objectively, highlights Draupadi's lack of respect as a woman. According to Wolf's (1994), the majority of women have endured sexual assault at work. This demonstrates that the problem of objectification extends beyond personal contacts at work and illustrates a problem that many women experiences. The helplessness of workers is the reason they are treated carelessly. One unpleasant treatment can occur through sexual harassment received by women, including Draupadi, from superiors or someone in a higher position. This also happens and is experienced by Draupadi when she becomes a servant of Queen Sudeshna.

The writer uses power feminism proposed by Naomi Wolf's perspective to analyze the data. The data of this study are taken from a novel written by Divakaruni entitled *The Palace of Illusions*. There are four earlier researchers that have examined Divakaruni's *The Palace of Illusions*. The first is Saumya Sharma (2023). The similarity between her article and this study is the source of data. In the article, she discusses about the scope of feminist linguistics that shows how notions from the disciplines of language and gender manifest through literary works and character interactions. Sharma focuses her analysis on conversational style, polysemous meanings of linguistics strategies, and the usage of sexist language that are reflected through the interactions among the characters. The findings of the study are the conversational styles, linguistics strategies, and sexist terminology indicate that the characters react in distinct ways and show their social position. The difference between this study and the present study is the topic and the theory used. In this article, Sharma uses Robin Lakoff and Deborah Tannen theory which focuses on linguistics aspect. Meanwhile, the present study uses Naomi Wolf's theory which highlights the causes of female characters' struggle for equality.

The results of this study show similarity and difference as well as the second article which was written by Amrutha S, Pillai, and Raja (2022). The similarity between this article and the present study is the source of data. The result of this article is women represent strength, power, and tenacity in the novels which indicate the concept of 'New Women.' In *The Palace of Illusions*, Draupadi is a powerful and clever woman. Draupadi is normally shown as more confrontational and explosive. She despises all princess stereotypes. It is in line with this study that Draupadi is able to decide what is best for her life and breaks the stereotype about women. Furthermore, the

differences between this article and the present study are in this article, Amrutha *et al.* use 'New Women' theory proposed by Dennis Shoesmith. In addition, they analyze two literary works written by Divakaruni entitled *The Palace of Illusions* and *The Forest of Enchantments*. They focus on the main female characters in both novels which are Sita and Draupadi. Meanwhile in this study, the writer focuses on analyzing Draupadi and Amba in the novel *The Palace of Illusions*. The writer also discovers that both of the female characters experience the lack of dignity.

The results of this study develop the results of the article written by Sulisty (2021). The similarity between this Sulisty's study and the present study is the source of data. He examines male feminism reflected by the male character, Krishna. The result of this article is Krishna represents a male feminist. He is a proponent of gender equality. He says that even gods are genderless, hence there is no perception of superiority based on gender distinction. Then, the differences between this study and the writer's are in this article, Sulisty focuses on the feminist aspects reflected by the male character. How the male character also takes a role to help women in order to gain what they should get. Meanwhile in this study, the writer focuses on the female characters to be examined.

Furthermore, the findings of this study build upon the research presented in the article by Zubair, Salim, and Larik (2021). Same as the present study, they also use the same novel as their data. The results are Draupadi is defined as a role model and rebellious heroine who challenges patriarchal society's rules and values. Draupadi is portrayed by Divakaruni as a paradigm of feminine empowerment and strength. The contrasts between their article and the current study lie in the theory and the focus of the analysis. Hassan uses Chandra Talpade Mohanty and Uma Narayan's theory and focuses on the main female character whereas this study focuses on analyzing Draupadi and Amba using Wolf's power feminism theory. The present study discovers that Amba also experiences unequal treatments because of patriarchal system.

CONCLUSION

Women struggle for some reasons. After analyzing the data, it can be concluded that the female characters struggle because of the restriction of controlling their own lives, limitation of their expressions, and the lack of equity and fairness in education, dignity, and self-esteem. Women are expected to live life according to the gender roles that exist in society. This cannot be

separated from the deep-rooted patriarchal culture. The writer addresses the challenge of women, particularly women's struggle for equality to be analyzed.

REFERENCES

- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (5th ed.). Melbourne: SAGE.
- Divakaruni, C. B. (2008). *The Palace of Illusions*. New York: Doubleday.
- S, A., Pillai, M. M., & Raja, A. G. (2022). Narrative of the Muted Selves: Reframing Womanhood in Chitra Banerjee's Select Works. *International Journal of Health Sciences*, 6, 10298–10309.
- S, H. (2021). Feminism in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Palace of Illusions*: A Critical Study. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 17(4), 3128–3132.
- Saputri, Y. D. (2018). A Feminist Analysis on Women's Struggles in *Breaking Gender Inequality* as Seen in Nevil Shute's *A Town Like Alice*. *English Language & Literature Journal*, 7(3).
- Sharma, S. (2023). The Scope of Feminist Linguistics for Literary Texts: An Analysis of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Palace of Illusions*. *An International Peer Reviewed Journal of English Studies*, 1(1), 117–124.
- Sivakumar, I., & Manimekalai, K. (2021). Masculinity and Challenges for Women in Indian Culture. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 22(5), 427–436.
- Sulistyo, N. Y. (2021). The Male Feminism of Krishna in Chitra Lekha Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Palace of Illusions*. *SPECTRAL Jurnal Ilmiah STBA*, 7(1).
- Tyson, L. (2015). *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide* (3rd ed.). London: Routledge.
- Wolf, N. (1994). *Fire with Fire: The New Female Power and How It Will Change the 21st Century*. London: Vintage.
- Zubair, H. Bin, Salim, B., & Larik, S. (2021). Struggle for Identity in Mythological Context: Third World Feminist Interpretation of Female Agency in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's Literary Fiction. *Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry (TOJQI)*, 12(8), 5425–5437.