

## **Indagation about Shikhandini: An Exemplary Grit of Feminism and Science - Concerning “Shikhandini - Warrior Princess of the Mahabharata”**

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### **Abstract**

The woman is never seen as anything other than an object, a secondary figure to the primacy of the male. The ideology of women reckoned as possession or territory to be conquered can be observed in the Kingdom of Hastinapur, which remains an example of patriarchal domination wherein women are acquiescent beings. This equation has been a source of contention among feminists because, as they see it, it enables the male to control the woman and the country, even as this control masquerades as protection.

The very creation and biological science both became cognizable and malleable through technology. IVF is a general (societal) technology that assays to ‘normalize’ ménages and gender relationships (‘ménages’ should possess children within it, and the ‘completeness’ of couples relies on children). The travail of the woman behooves the prone to conceptive technologies and medicalization procedures/techniques (ultrasound scans). The psychogenic/psychological literature on transsexuality employs the selfsame designations to discuss the gender distinctiveness/identity or role of the transsexual, to endeavor the other transsexuals discards the one as if these typecasts had some sort of ontological actuality and all that conferred by ‘feeling’ which is exactly for instance, “a man trapped in a woman’s body”.

**Key Words:** Shikhandini, Feminism, Transgender, Transsexual, IVF, Psychological literature.

### **Introduction:**

The woman is never seen as anything other than an object, a secondary figure to the primacy of the male. The feminist debates about ‘subjectivity’ have revolved around issues like:

- i) Does subjectivity occur in the body, the psyche, or the socially conditioned or determined experience?
- ii) Is subjectivity the individual or social?

The most common and sustained notion of the subject has come from within the liberal humanist tradition. The subject here is seen as the rational, coherent individual over the social or collective. The individual is the seat of freewill and has the power to alter the course of her life - a power that in critical theory is commonly termed as ‘agency’. Latter-day feminists have had serious problems with this notion of the subject.

If subjectivity is seen to arise from rationality, then it automatically excludes the woman as a subject with agency. Then, the individual in many societies is located within communities and groups that also contribute to her sense of self (‘I belong’).

Thus, subjectivity is not always located in the individual alone but is socially validated, determined, and constructed. Roles pre-ordained for women - such as mother, wife, or daughter - are subject positions into which women need to fit themselves (what according to Marxism/Marxist term, in Althusser, the process of ‘interpellation’). This means, while the man might be able to choose his subjectposition, the woman’s is predetermined.

The woman has always been represented as a territory to be conquered and dominated. Equating the nation with the mother (as motherland) is an old trope in cultural practices across the world. This equation has been a source of contention among feminists because, as they see it, it enables the male to control the woman and the country, even as this control masquerades as protection.

An Italian thinker Antonio Gramsci popularized the term 'hegemony', which is the paramountcy and bolstering of power relations. The literary critics substantiated the power which nestles amidst all social relations. Hegemony is cognate to ideology but a puissant one. It embraces ideology and its accomplishment depends on the acceptance of the domination by the dominated. Hastinapur - the vast dominion Empire known for its Supremacy which was immensely grounded on a single invincible warrior Bheeshma, who was popularly called Maharathi, whose expedition to broaden the horizons besieged the minor Kingdom Panchala which is hardly competent when juxtaposed with Hastinapur army. Maharathi is culpable for his action against the King of Panchala Prishada, but Bishma grabbed away the King's pride and self-respect and made Prishada lead a life of self-flagellation and humiliation. In a nutshell, for a warrior, death ensuing from combat is glorious and sempiternal, rather than the tardily deceasing of old age. The woman is invariably regarded as mere possession or object, subservient to the precedence of the male. The individual's distinctiveness is scarcely about rationality alone, it includes qualities like feelings or emotions, sentiments, etc. Men are accustomed to and projected as rational and women as 'irrational' or emotional. The ideology of women reckoned as possession or territory to be conquered can be observed in the Kingdom of Hastinapur, which remains an exemplar of patriarchal domination wherein women are acquiescent beings.

The episode of Maharathi asking for the hands of Kasi Princesses for his feckless half-sibling whose stance persisted as an execrable example that was emulated by subsequent generations of Hastinapur. The munificent Maharathi Bheeshma is the one who entrenched the arrogance and dominion supremacy and grounded the foundation for demolition of the vast Hastinapur Empire by repudiating princess Amba who was humiliated by prince Salva, by then the garland of ever-blooming lotuses bestowed by Lord Karthikeya to Amba which transformed the kismet of Hastinapur Empire and other associated Kingdoms.

Ashwini Shenoy has done groundbreaking research and elucidated epoch-making events in Shikhandini's life, her transformation from woman to man in a scientific stance which constitutes an intrigue and unfeigned storyline with cogency, human fervor, propelled *raison d'être* (purpose), and uttermost forfeit. Finally, in this nouvelle aurora, Shikhandini's tale retold haply synchronizes with the recognition and acceptance secured by the third gender in all its excruciating laudation.

### **Shikhandini Garlands Amba's Ever-Blooming Lotus:**

Traditionally eight-petalled lotus symbolizes regeneration; the lotus, on the other hand, connotes rebirth; then it symbolically betokens anomalous changes that are about to ensue in the future. The underlying logico-emblematic impact of aforementioned illustrations is vehement that, by the time the individual has resorted to the esoteric conceptualization of extramundane array, adept of enunciating the perspicacious and profound bonding between the 'dyad worlds' one transforms perforce to the conjunction(conjoining) the symbolization of earth (the square) with that of Elysium (the heaven or the circle).

The actuality that illustrates integrating the scintillating 'centre' extramundane symbolization of the ensuing moirai (destiny) of the Wight or pneuma (spirit) gauges the actuality that they are moreover psychical conceptions of selfsame predestined i.e., of its presage and the mode of realizing it - in a nutshell, of the transcendental percipience of consummation.

Therefore, the adjoining of the square with the circle (in aforementioned contours as the lotus, the rose, the star, concentricity of circles, the circle with a dual perceptible central point, etc.) is emblematic of the ultimate phase in the individuation process or viz. of the stage of numinous evolution accomplished on the elimination of flaws (asymmetrical form) includes all mundane wishes, with the objective of

concentrating upon the accomplishment of Wholeness and a vision of Utopia. Shikhandini's impetuous action by adorning that garland of blue lotuses designed her destiny and transformed her grudge-bearing attitude to Shikhandi a transmuted warrior Prince who combated against malevolent and vicious Kaurava(s) Princes in sanguinary Great War with the intention of instigating Righteousness.

### **The Prerogative for Women in Panchala and Restriction of Prerogative in Hastinapur:**

Predominantly Panchala was untrammelled by gender discrimination. King Drupada's daughter Shikhandini was well trained in martial arts, and warfare, along with that she was taught science, mathematics, sociology, economics, Vedas, and Upanishads in her tutelage. There is a political manipulation behind this "untrammelled gender discrimination"; it's scrupulously about the seer's strange prognostication of Bheeshma's death in the hands of a woman. For which Shikhandini was drilled, nurtured, and fostered in secrecy as a weapon of destruction summoned at the right time to avenge her royal blood.

The assertion of Drupada insinuates the disingenuous conception of gender; the prerogative underprops an intense guileful intent behind it. It's unimaginable to kill Maharathi who has the boon of Iccha-Maran which makes him unassailable. Drupada said, "even if it's true defeat at a woman's hand would definitely make him wish for death." (Shenoy 64)

The words uttered by Drupada unambiguously connote his "penis pride". Freud on the contrary mentioned women suffer from 'penis envy'. Theorized and visually propounded influence the minds of humankind. Consequently, the observed information gets imbibed in the minds of humankind, it is naught but an artificial insistence of ideology which is assumed to be a natural one. Shikhandini crinkled at his words.

"How did it matter? Victory was a victory; defeat was defeat, whatever the warrior's gender. Men are blessed with greater physical strength but battles were fought and won with skill and strategy as much as strength." (Shenoy 64)

The women are recognized with 'sex', for Beauvoir as regards Wittig is a commingling of the categorization of women with the purported attributes of the sexualization of their physiques and therefore an interdict to concur emancipation and autarky to women as it is ostensibly relished by men. Ergo the desolation of the categorization of sex would be the obliteration of the ascribed, sex that has, through a misogynistic beckon of synecdoche proceeded to seize the space of the individual, the volition Cognito. In a nutshell, only blokes are 'persons', besides there exists no gender but feminine.

### **Shikhandini's Émigré:**

The point of fact is that Shikhandini as a woman never suffered from penis envy but rather felt self-abasing; she under her own steam pulverized Kaurava(s) Princes, but her valor/labor went unnoticed rather blamed for losing to Pandavas and was expelled from Kingdom. She ventured into harum-scarum experimentation of gender transformation and demonstrated valor, heroism, intelligence, rationality, practicality, and distinctiveness are certainly not associated with gender.

Feminist theory and literature nonetheless surmised with a great deal that behind the deed there is a 'doer'. It is vindicated that there can be no agent without agency therefore there won't be competence to instigate modification within the society of the circumstances of dominance. On the question of a subject within the concatenation of theories, Wittig's radical feminist theory engrosses gnomic position. Wittig from one standpoint seems to wrangle the metaphysics of substance, but she sustains the human subject the individual on the other hand as the *recherché* locus of the medium.

### **Shikhandini's Swayamwara and Espousal:**

Shikhandini on her repatriation to Panchala for Draupadi's marriage, Drupada commended her victory against Kaurava(s) Princes and justified her appellation 'Athirathi'.

"Fighting a woman is against our dharma". Dueling a woman who is as good a warrior as any of you present here, is not against any of Kshatriya law, replied Drupada calmly."

"I will not raise my sword against a woman, said one of the contestants in a loud

voice. Many of the others agreed”.

“None wished to duel with her, for if they lost, they would become the laughing stock of every kingdom. Losing to a man was acceptable; losing to a woman was worse than death. Such were the norms of society”. (Shenoy 137)

Drupada arranged for her swayamvara Prince of Dharshana Kush to win her hand by competing with her in the sword fight despite the denial of other Kings and Princes. The author’s novel differs from the original version of Mahabharata in which the Princess of Dasarna marries Prince Shikhandi of Panchala.

The women’s bod has been delineated as mother, tantalizing, corporeal, sensual, and procreant wrangle feminists. The woman is accustomed to the values of the societal patriarchal and attributes specific values to the bod of the woman, which has been observed and demurred to numerous varieties of statements that objectify a woman’s bod. i) Women should assimilate certain stereotypes as altruistic beings, mothers, staunch wives, etc. ii) Beauty contests quarry the woman’s body for the bloke’s gaze. iii) ‘Feminine’ modes include maquillage surgery and bod beautification. iv) Feminine beauty is associated with sylphlike appearance (as shown in advertisements, films, and fashion) impels girls to rigorous efforts to lose weight. V) The nation itself is personified as a ‘motherland’ that necessitates defense service by men.

#### **Draupadi’s Vastraharan:**

Draupadi was avenged by Duryodhan for the humiliation faced by him in Indraprastha. Pandava(s) brothers lost everything including their wife in the dice game, by then Draupadi was disrobed in the court hall publicly.

In none of the cases, feminists deplore, despite the fact it’s her bod does the woman have the privilege, the woman’s bod, consequently is solely the objective of the sway, restraint, study, and gaze. A woman’s sensuality, aspiration, or distinctiveness is accustomed to the society that has been manipulated by blokes, she who’s nay her own subject.

#### **Shikhandini’s Retarded Conceiving:**

Initially, Shikhandini had inconveniences in conceiving a child but her orisons furnished benison she conceived on her visit to Panchala after ten years of her marriage. But destiny had different plans for her on her return to Dasarna her blood ran cold on witnessing the marriage of Kush and Hema.

According to feminists, the woman is relegated to the womb, virtually as if her sole objective is bearing children. Furthermore, the famous psychologist Freud postulated about women who are societally considered as ‘second sex’ since she suffers from a ‘lack’ which he both biologically and psychologically called ‘penis-envy’ and proffered an explanation.

Sheelasmith Firestone disputed that woman could be candidly unshackled only if she and her bod were disenthralled of procreation in her *The Dialect of Sex* (1970). According to Ruth Hubbard who has done pioneering work in the field of reproductive biology (1992) observed that women at the initial stages had predominance over the realm of accouchement because birthing occurs within the house. Furthermore, reproductive technologies are patriarchally influenced primly because maternity is extrapolated as the culminating prominence of a woman’s life - besides those who aren’t birthmothers are surmised to/as severed as deficient/lacking something.

In lieu, Valerie Hartouni (1991) has manifested nouvelle technologies like In Vitro Fertilization (IVF), which are proffered and proselytized as a boon to women, which favor women satiate their motherhood natures and their existence. IVF has brought forth a multifarious technologized guise of ancient bigotries anent women’s bods. Sarah Franklin disputes (1997) on women’s bods became culverts for technical marvels. The very creation and biological science both became cognizable and malleable through technology.

In a nutshell, it’s comprehensively about social relationships and intrinsically technology bears no relation between genders and their contributions which is pivotal. IVF is a general (societal) technology that assays to ‘normalize’ ménages and gender relationships (‘ménages’ should possess children within it, and the ‘completeness’ of couples relies on children).

The travail bod of the woman behooves the prone to conceptive technologies and medicalization procedures/techniques (ultrasound scans).

### **Shikhandini's Émigré from Dharshana:**

After delivering a boy baby named him Shatradeva by the time destiny revealed its plans to Shikhandini through Govind/Krishna on the day of the first-year celebration. Shikhandini realized her responsibility and decides to leave her a-year-old son under the control of Hema and Kush. She gets exiled from Dasarna to Yakshavana.

The interrogation anent within the philosophical account of what comprises 'personal identity'; virtually all the time focuses on interrogation of what internal characteristic of the individual demonstrates the progression or self-conception of the individual throughout, as a matter of debate: how long do administrative customs of gender formation and segregation comprise identity, the inner coherence of the individual, in reality, the self-identical status of the person?

### **Shikhandini's Transformation:**

Shikhandini reached Yakshavana for executing her plans further, for that she discussed with Sthunakarna and Yakshini- her participation in the Great War in which women are prohibited to participate in the Great War. After a long discussion, finally, Sthunakarna, Shikhandini, and Pashupati came out with a decision of gender transformation, and the participation of transgender will not be prohibited while constructing the rules of war.

Science of Ila, which was named after Ila who's the mother of Pururavas ancestor of the present Kuru dynasty. The science introduced by her was a boon to those who feel they're trapped (born) into the wrong body, they can transform using this Science of Ila but it's considered as Dark Science and banned from practicing, the prepotent society of the time cowardly assumed it would lose its supremacy. "With the use of Ila, the suppressed third gender began to rise" (Shenoy 177).

The psychogenic/psychological literature on transsexuality employs the selfsame designations to discuss the gender distinctiveness/identity or role of the transsexual, in order to endeavor the other transsexuals discards the one as if these typecasts had some sort of ontological actuality and all that conferred by 'feeling' which is exactly for instance, "a man trapped in a woman's body"

"Society, as we know it now, is undoubtedly a man's world. Over a time, female energy has become dominated by the male. It is no longer considered equal". (Shenoy 177)

The gender antahsraava are not merely responsible for gender determination. Pashupati further explained that in women, the male antahsraava plays a prominent role in the building of bones and muscles strength, whereas in men the female antahsraava is required for the proper functioning of the heart in a small ratio.

Testosterone therapy produces more significant results in inducing secondary sex attributes in transmen than hormonal manipulations do in transwomen. The factuality, in general, is nothing but the biological scheme of the human physique is 'Eve', and prepending testosterone either endogenous or exogenous will develop notable reversible or irreversible changes to a person's physique.

With regards to secondary sexual attributes, the transformation from Eve to Adam is quite facile, but once Eve transforms into Adam, it's difficult to get back/become Eve if at all it's impossible about which transwomen are aware. So, whilst testosterone is efficacious and advantageous for transmen, which constitutes an additional notable affirmation to the ceaseless presumption of the masculine gender role which stands far ahead of estrogen work in transwomen.

Many people by luck have only mild gender dysphoria, if treated they bemoan and opt to keep themselves away from/out of hormonal therapy. Another consequence of scrutiny of candidates' promptness causes a real tangible perturbation in medicated transgender patients a candid uncommonness.

Medical literature on transsexualism employs the word masculinity or masculine and femininity or feminine to evince what its instigators apprehend to be tangible changes that transpire whether through the dissemination of hormones or surgery.

Money in order to specify what actually happens when hormones and surgery are administered, he deploys the terms masculine or masculinity and feminine or femininity is actually the feminization of a man or the masculinization of a woman. This is meticulously that transpires because stereotypical masculinity and femininity are socially constructed and culturally disseminated for male and female bodies respectively, but when it comes to transsexuality, there is nothing to do with a male or female body.

Therefore female - to - constructed - male(s) move on from one stereotype to the other. The words of gender used throughout this article are done to point out the ostensible, artifactual, societally, and surgically fabricated change is what betide alternately a profound integral change that revitalizes existential evolution.

The specious transsexual procedure has been accentuated and consciously employed through stereotyped language. Cultural identity depends on the constructed identity of feminization or masculinization in society and the role of the individual is to socialize accordingly to the constructed criteria. Similarly, the sex reassignment surgery itself is nothing but a surgical construction of body in which the shape or appearance of the body is done according to gender requirements. The body of both masculine and feminine has been societally stereotyped wherein gender is defined. For instance: in a man, a heavier jaw, broad shoulder, widened chest, etc.

In order to fit themselves into the fixed stereotype of gender construction while acquiring a new body, transsexuals go through a number of poly-surgeries most of the surgeries are cosmetic by nature. The specious stereotypical progression of masculinization or feminization is meticulously what betides in the transsexual situation. When pre or postoperative transsexuals are referred to, the words 'he' or 'she' is specified in quotes to evince male and female.

After completing the first stage of transformation in Shikhandini, Pashupathi explained about Shastra Chikitsa which is an operative procedure invented to treat patients with serious or severe ailments. By using the Shastra Chikitsa operative procedure upper part of Shikhandini's torso will be transformed which is the most important and necessary step in the transformation from woman to man. The most factual information that has been misinterpreted by the commons is that Yakshas are magical beings with magical powers, they have the capability to transform humans but they are well-versed in advanced science and medicine.

Transsexuals are not male or female predominantly, but they are indicated as masculine or feminine in every manner. Likewise, maleness or femaleness is determined by certain chromosomes, but masculinity and femininity are societally and surgically constructed. The sex transformation odyssey of female - to constructed-male transsexual starts with hormone treatment.

In order to stimulate some hair growth on the face and body, to arrest menstruation, perhaps to modify the voice and diminution of breast tissue androgen is injected into the body which also develops muscles and the appearance of the body gradually becomes manly or more like masculine for instance broadened shoulders.

The size of the clitoris enlarges often due to the long-term dosage of testosterone. However, menstruation does not get suppressed every time by hormone treatment. After injecting the androgens, in some cases, breakthrough bleeding occurs by the time radiation had to be used which according to medical literature is radiation menopause. One of the most grievous consequences of androgen is that the effects are seldom reversible. In case the woman who is undergoing transformation decides to stop the hormone therapy her vocalization retains its low pitch and her facial hair remains forever. Most transsexuals go through a series of surgeries like mastectomy which is the premier step removal/reduction of breasts since testosterone treatment works moderately female transsexuals tend to procure this surgical procedure. Subsequently hysterectomy the removal of ovaries the prominent step in female-to-male transformation surgery. Eventually, oophorectomy (removal of ovaries was habituated to tame anomalous

women in the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century of sexual surgery) wherein the vagina is remnant.

Pavki, a Shastra Chikitsa specialist pacified Shikhandini psychologically and said it's very important for a patient to remain strong both physically and mentally to bear the pain and shock. Shastra Chikitsa bears grave risks and has meager chances of success, besides there are cases where patients never wake up or recovered. Pavki and her assistants began to apply the thick paste to the upper torso to ease the pain which was a pain-numbing medication used during the surgical treatment.

Shikhandini felt the knife cut through the skin during surgery, which reminded her of the numerous battle scars she carried in her body. Her transformation is also no less than a battle. She was conscious enough to feel that pain but when the knife penetrated into the tissues of her bosom it was really intense that the pain-numbing medicine could no longer suppress the pain. Tears sprang out of her eyes and her body began to shake, she prayed for her pain to stop. The pain she had endured while giving birth to her child seemed nothing compared to the pain, she was undergoing at the time of transformation surgery.

When Pavki commenced extracting the tissues from Shikhandini's bosom, she cried out sharply, who couldn't bear the tormenting pain of extraction. She spelled the name of Krishna to save her in that delirium pain but she never interrupted Pavki by screaming or begging to stop the transformation process which exposed her bravery and detachment. But her pulse rate was bleak and she was sinking. When Pavki lost all her hopes, it was a piece of mesmerizing flute music that brought Shikhandini's life back. Pavki gave some seduction and finally Shastra Chikitsa surgery was finally successful. It took three solid years for her to get completely transformed and build her muscle strength. Shikhandi sculpted her body every inch similar to that of a male warrior and her chiseled torso and muscular arms imply her strong will and determination, then the infinite scars on her body reflect her pain and sacrifice.

#### **Shikhandi's Role in the Great War:**

Shikhandini finally transformed into Shikhandi who was quite eligible to fight in the Great War. He was appointed as the Senapathi on the tenth day of the war, at first, she dueled with Guru Dronacharya defeated him, and finally reached the place of Maharathi. He asked for her pardon which dragged her step backward since her grudge-bearing and avenging attitude transmuted along with her transformation, she became the zenith of rectitude; it cost her selfhood when she encountered an anomalous situation. Her sole intention was to combat venomous and vindictive Kaurava(s) Princes in the sanguinary Great War with the intention of instigating rectitude. Shikhandini with the intention of initiating righteousness (Dharma) battled against Bheeshma aka Maharathi and slaughtered him.

#### **Conclusion:**

Thus Shikhandi - the transformed Prince - the perfect combination of Shiva-Shakti, the androgynous form that combined both the masculine principle of strength and the feminine principle of wisdom. In this novel, Shikhandini duels a swordfight with Bheeshma on the battlefield. Assuredly, she was a fierce fighter (swordswoman), but with the defeat of Bheeshma on the bed of arrows, many readers may seem difficult to digest the swordfight.

From this perspective gender is not simply a noun; at this same time is neither a compendium of self-reliant aspects, for we have observed the concrete ramification of gender is a performative production impelled by the gender coherence of regulatory customs. Thus, within the surmised parley of the metaphysical substance, gender demonstrates to be spatial - precisely comprising the identity is ostensibly to be.

In this nugget, whether gender is invariably performing, or subject not performing might be assumed to pre-exist the defunct. The reconsideration of gender stratification remains to controvert which is extraneous from the substance of metaphysics must cogitate the pertinence of Nietzsche's assert "on the Genealogy of Morals" that there is no extant 'being' behind the action, executing, behooving; 'the executor' is barely a contrivance adjoined to the deed - the deed is ubiquitous.

#### **Research Finding and Outcome:**

Today the surgery/operation performed for gender transformation is accepted as a scientific procedure since the methods and procedure are given an understandable format. But the very transformation of gender that had been described in Epic scriptures as Shastra Chikitsais prone to superstitions due to misconception of the occurrences. For instance, Yakshas mentioned in this novel are neither 'nature spirits' nor demi-Gods with magical and supernatural powers rather are normal humans like others. It was their lifestyle, profound knowledge, and ardor for science that is beyond human understanding that facilitates them to perform astonishing feats through science, likewise, the miracles of the past are present days' science.

The next question to be answered is about the existence of God who is described as ubiquitous in sooth exists if one surmises everything has a scientific elucidation. Definitely, there's God, the empyreal. But humankind muddles God as a thaumaturge. Is it not feasible that God is haply the greatest exemplary scientist of all? If God was a thaumaturgist, why human evolution commenced with a single cell evolving over yugas? He could simply have performed a Yagya, enounced a few mantras, and generated a complete earthling (human) in a day, rather it has taken yugas to formulate this globe; to maintain stability and neutral balance in everything; to devise the ecosystem; to create food chain; the laws of cosmos. Humankind shrinks the entire concatenation of accomplishment to thaumaturgy out of misconception.

God has substantiated his experiments and inventions all over the world for us to realize, understand and admire - in the soil, the air, and water, and greatest of all, the PanchaBhuta/Bhoota in the human body. The spellbound creation of God the greatest scientist of all was neglected due to misinterpretation.

Hence, by discovering the experiments of God Yakshas (Sthunakarna, Pavki, Pashupati) performed the transformation of Shikhandini and sculpted out of (her) the 'him' (in her) through scientific progression. Pavki is the one who performed the menacing operation for Shikhandini and transformed her into Shikhandi. Both the characters, the one who operates and the one who gets operated are exemplary characters of feminism who through their practicality proved that gender isn't a destiny rather, they cognized they're deputed to accomplish the responsibility howbeit, wherein Shikhandini, who is destined to battle in the Great War and establish righteousness for which she (gave) (transformed) (her) gender as the cost to fulfill her responsibility, on the other hand, Pavki, an ingenious student of Vyasa and Chikitsak proved her rationality through her menacing surgery, medical researches and stands as an ideal (woman) whose intellect is par excellence which manifests that education, inculcation, and practicality make humankind rational.

#### **Note on Spelling**

1. Ila or Ilā - in Hindu legends an Androgyne deity, known for their sex changes.  
Maharathi - A warrior who is capable of fighting 12 Atirathis/720,000 warriors simultaneously circumspect in his mastery of all forms of weapons and combat skills.
2. Athirathi - A warrior capable of contending with 12 Rathi class warriors or 60,000 warriors simultaneously, circumspect in his mastery of all forms of weapons and combat skills.
3. Iccha-maran - (Self) Willed/Wished Death
4. Swayamwara - In India, in ancient times girl of marriageable age chose a husband among a group of suitors.
5. Antahsraava - Hormones
6. Shastra Chikitsa - Surgery or Operation
7. PanchaBhuta/Bhoota- Five basic and great elements of nature, which are the kernel of the entire creation of the cosmos according to Hinduism.
8. Yagya - Ritual/offering done before sacred fire often with mantras.
9. Chikitsak - Medical practitioner; surgeon in this novel(context)



# 10. Bod - Body

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