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I would like to express my special thanks of gratitude to my teacher Dr.V.G.Shree Hari, who gave the golden opportunity to do this wonderful topic “Role of Krishna in the Mahabharata”.

It helped me to know thoroughly about Krishna. When I was researching the topic, I came to know many unknown stories of Krishna. This topic not only added new thing to my knowledge but also to my life. Some stories which I have gone through are insane. I am very thankful to you sir.

Introduction of Krishna:

Friend, philosopher, guide – these three words explain the role that Lord Krishna plays in the Mahabharata. Krishna, who is an avatar of Vishnu, is the God of compassion and love. Krishna's early life has been well documented in another literary masterpiece called the Srimad Bhagavatam also written by Vyaasa. It gives us a complete insight into Krishna's personal life but does not say anything about his public life. Vyaasa elaborates on this aspect of Krishna's life in the Mahabharata, where we see him on a mission to rid the world of evil.

Vyaasa wrote the character of Krishna with the sole aim of depicting **a life of perfect unselfishness** – which means Krishna always carried out actions that helped others but never helped him in any way. In the Mahabharata, Krishna is almost omnipresent, making his presence felt at the most crucial moments in the epic.

The life of Sri Krishna may be divided into **three books**, three sections or three parts: the **early life, the family life, and the public life**. In the Tenth Skanda, **the Tenth Book of the Srimad Bhagavata**, Vyasa describes to us in detail the early life of Krishna and his home life—his family life, we may say. From **the birth of Krishna until the death of Kamsa** can be called the **early life of Krishna**. From his encounter **with Virasunda until his marriage to Rukmini** and others, and his encounter with certain local kings, may be called his home life or his **family life**. But the public life of Krishna, which is of a different character altogether, is found only in the Mahabharata. It is not in the Srimad Bhagavata or in any other Purana. Vyasa is silent about Krishna's public life when he writes the Bhagavata, and he is silent about Krishna's early life and family life when he writes the Mahabharata. We must read the two together. In one sense, we may say the Mahabharata follows the Srimad Bhagavata.

Krishna's entry into Mahabharata:

Krishna made his entry into the Mahabharata at a later stage – during Draupadi's swayamvar. He was a silent spectator in Drupad's court, and he watched as kings and princes failed in the challenge set to marry Draupadi. He was still watching as Arjuna, dressed as a Brahmin, won the challenge, and took his bride home, much to the chagrin of the royal spectators.

After Arjuna introduced Draupadi to his mother Kunti, Krishna arrived carrying expensive presents for the Pandavas. When Yudhishtira asked the reason for the costly gifts,

Krishna replied saying because the glory of the Pandavas had been seen in the court of King Drupad. He was the only one sitting in the swayamvar who recognized that the Brahmins in Drupad's court were in fact the Pandavas. This is just one example of Krishna's ability to **recognize greatness in the ordinary**.

Krishna's bond with Pandavas:

Krishna was a great friend, especially to the Pandavas in their time of need. When the Pandavas came back to Hastinapur after a period of exile, Duryodhana begrudgingly gave them a piece of dry land called Khandavprastha, with no water and infertile soil to rule over. It is with **Krishna's help that the Pandavas converted this land into a beautiful kingdom with a magnificent palace that outshone Duryodhana's abode**.

Krishna's selflessness came to the fore once more when the Pandavas returned from their second exile of 13 years and a war between them and the Kauravas was now inevitable. Krishna tried to stop the war by going to Duryodhana's court and asking him **to settle his dispute with his cousin brothers amicably, but to no avail**.

Draupadi vastrabharan:

Once when **Krishna suffered a nick to his finger after wielding the all-powerful Sudarshan Chakra**, it is said that his own sister Subhadra began searching for a piece of cotton cloth that she could tear off and create a bandage therefrom for him.

However, **Draupadi quickly tore off a section of her expensive brocaded saree pallu and quickly sealed the bleeding**. This deed remained etched in Krishna's mind. The Yadava prince of Mathura returned the favour during the Cheerharan (chirharan) episode.

It is said that when Duryodhana and Dushasana subjected the **Pandava princes' wife Draupadi** to an attempt at disrobing her, **she prayed to her Sakha, her brother**.

Brother and Sakha Krishna then **sent immeasurable reams of cloth to keep Draupadi covered**, thus defeating the evil and nefarious designs of the Kaurava princes. The Kauravas' cheerharan failed and Draupadi was saved the humiliation of being stripped of clothes in a full-court with even elders like Bheeshma and Vidur looking on helplessly.



It is said that Draupadi tying Krishna's wounded finger with silken **pallu** is synonymous with what girls now do by **tying rakhi to a brother's wrist and he, in turn, must protect the sister just as Krishna stood by Draupadi.**

Krishna's commitment to Draupadi's welfare **remained until the end of the life of all of them.** Even in the great battle at Kurukshetra, Krishna - though he refused to wield a weapon on either side - became **charioteer to Arjuna.**

A charioteer in a battlefield drenched in blood and crisscrossed by cart-tracks - was a wieldy job. **For Draupadi's sake, Krishna guided and protected his own cousin Arjuna** - the husband and love interest of his Sakhi.

Even to date, the pure love and understanding of the friend-brother-relative Krishna for strong-headed beauty Draupadi is stuff folklore is made of and elicits only awe and respect.

Krishna's role in Kurukshetra war:

Krishna had a large force called **the Narayani Sena** and was himself a great warrior. Once Duryodhana and Arjuna thus both went to Krishna at Dwarka to ask for his help. Duryodhana arrived first and found Krishna asleep. When Krishna woke up, he saw Arjuna first and gave him the first right to make his request. Krishna told Arjuna and Duryodhana that he would give the Narayani Sena, to one side and himself as a non-combatant to the other. Arjuna on behalf of **the Pandavas chose Krishna.** Later Arjuna requested Krishna to be his charioteer and he agreed wholeheartedly.

When the war was declared and the two armies were facing each other, **Arjuna was in a dilemma and he felt weak and sickened** at the prospect of killing his entire family. Arjuna turned to Krishna for divine advice and teachings. Krishna advised him of his duty. **This conversation forms the Bhagavad Gita,** one of the most respected

religious and philosophical texts in the Hindu religion. Krishna reminded him that this was a **war between righteousness and unrighteousness**, and it was Arjuna's duty to support the cause of sin.

Krishna in Mahabharata, always talked about dharma and adharma, but during the Kurukshetra war, he used deceit to kill most of the great warriors, such as Bhishma and Dronacharya. What Krishna did in the battlefield was not just deceit – it was absolute treachery. There were intricate strategic formations in which the warriors fought. One such formation, called chakravyuha, was almost impossible to penetrate, unless you knew its intricacies.



CHAKRAVYUHA OR PADMAVYUHA

Arjuna used to be the only one of the Pandavas who had this knowledge so, he was taken far away from the war place by kauravas. When his wife Subhadra was pregnant with Abhimanyu, Arjuna spoke in the presence of his unborn son about how to penetrate a chakravyuha, and even in his mother's womb, Abhimanyu grasped it. But Arjuna did not talk about how to come out of the chakravyuha, **because when he was about to tell Krishna interrupted him**. Many years later, when the Kaurava army formed itself into a chakravyuha and was about to slaughter the whole Pandava army, **Abhimanyu, 17 years of age** but already a great hero, **broke like a furious arrow through the chakravyuha but, Bhima and Yudhisthira were unable to follow him to save him, because of Shiva's boon to Saindhava he can stop all the pandavas except Arjuna for a day in war**. In the middle of the chakravyuha, with no one else to support him, he killed many key people of the Kaurava army. Then his chariot went down. All his weapons were broken. You are not supposed to kill an unarmed person, but the Kauravas thought, "Even if he is just 17 years of age, he causes too much devastation." They felt they must put an end to Abhimanyu and attacked him. Abhimanyu picked up a chariot wheel and fought with that. No one person alone could

kill him, so many of the Kaurava heroes gathered around Abhimanyu, which was totally against the laws of the battle. They all surrounded the boy and killed him.



Abhimanyu enters chakravyuha

It was a rule of the war that when the sun sets, they must stop fighting. In the evening, when Arjuna came back to his camp, he saw his people mourning and realized that Abhimanyu had been killed in such a way. In straight battle, only very few men could have defeated Abhimanyu. Someone described how they had surrounded him from all sides and slain him. Arjuna took a vow: “By tomorrow sundown, I will have killed Jayadrada. Otherwise, I will kill myself.” Hearing this, Duryodhana was overjoyed. He thought all they have to do was to completely protect Jayadrada, and Arjuna would die that night by his own hand, because he would stick to his word. Jayadrada was terrified. He wanted to quit the battle and go home. Duryodhana told him that this would not be good for their reputation. He said to Jayadrada, “Don’t worry. We will deploy all our forces to protect you.”

The next day, they formed a huge protective formation for Jayadrada so that he would not get killed. But from the first moment of the battle, Arjuna started penetrating through the opposing army towards Jayadrada, because if he did not kill Jayadrada, he would have to kill himself.

At the same time, Satyaki and Burishwara got into a fight. **Satyaki, a close friend of Krishna and Arjuna**, had an old feud to settle with Burishwara, who was over 70 years of age but still a great warrior. Satyaki was supposed to protect King Yudhisthira. But overcome by personal emotions, he left Yudhisthira’s side and went towards Burishwara to attack him.

When Arjuna saw that the king was left unprotected, he got concerned. But he could not divert his attention since his own life was at stake. He continued to go towards Jayadrada.

Satyaki attacked Burishwara, but after some time, Burishwara knocked down Satyaki from his chariot. Satyaki lost all his weapons and almost fainted. Burishwara descended from his chariot and put his foot on Satyaki's chest. Krishna saw this. Satyaki had been a staunch and a reliable lieutenant to him for many years. Krishna knew his abilities and limitations, and that Satyaki could not defeat Burishwara.

Krishna told Arjuna, "Burishwara is going to kill Satyaki. You must get Burishwara first before he kills Satyaki." Arjuna said, "How can I do that? Burishwara is fighting with Satyaki. Shooting him now would be against the Kshatriya dharma." Krishna told him, "Satyaki has come here only to fight for you. How can you let someone kill him now? Save him." Arjuna said, "No. It is against the law." Then Burishwara pulled out his sword to decapitate Satyaki. Again, **Krishna said, "Your friend, who put his life at stake for you, will be slaughtered now if you don't reach out to him. Will you let him die like this? What kind of dharma is this?"** All this time, Arjuna's arrow was aimed at Jayadrada. When Burishwara was about to decapitate Satyaki, Arjuna turned and shot the arrow at Burishwara. **Burishwara's right hand got severed.** He looked around and said to Arjuna, "How could you do this? While I was fighting with another man, you shot me from behind and severed my hand? Anyone who has Kshatriya blood in him would not do such a dastardly act. I know you would not have done this by yourself. This cowherd with whom you are must have influenced you." **Arjuna's anger flared up,** and he said, **"Yesterday, when you, a great warrior, joined many others to surround my son, a 17-year-old boy, and stab him from behind, where was your dharma? What are you talking about now?"** Ashamed of the act that he had committed the day before, Burishwara put his head down. He went next to his chariot and sat down in lotus posture.

Satyaki became conscious again and looked around, completely bewildered. He did not know what had happened. When he saw Burishwara sitting there, his old emotions and rage took over. Burishwara's severed hand, still holding his sword, was lying there on the ground. Satyaki threw the hand away, picked up the sword, and went towards Burishwara. Both Krishna and Arjuna were screaming, "Stop! Don't do this, Satyaki!" But Satyaki loped off Burishwara's head, while the latter was sitting with eyes closed. Krishna put his head down; he had not wanted this. Arjuna was totally aghast about what Satyaki had done. But Satyaki was exalted because he had been able to take revenge at last.

Day by day, as the war went on, all dharma was broken. The first day, they fought by the law. The second day, they started breaking the law, and by the fourteenth, fifteenth day, all law was broken. People did what they wanted and killed each other at will.



Arjuna slays Jayadrada.

Arjuna continued to penetrate towards Jayadrada, but it looked like Jayadrada was out of reach for him. The whole Kaurava army had rallied around to protect him. When **Krishna** saw that there was no way for Arjuna to defeat Jayadrada in this situation, he **used his magic and made a huge cloud appear, so that it looked like it was sunset**. Seeing this, Jayadrada was absolutely thrilled and relieved, because he thought the battle was over for the day, and he had survived, which meant Arjuna would die that day. The whole Kaurava army was exalted and shouted slogans of victory. Everyone had put their arms down. But the sun came back, and Arjuna shot Jayadrada and he fell. One more deception.

As if that was not enough, when Karna and Arjuna came to fight, Krishna interfered again. Karna and Arjuna were evenly matched in their martial arts. For everything that Arjuna did, Karna had an answer. But Karna had one special weapon, the astra, for which Arjuna had no answer. **Karna aimed it at Arjuna's forehead and was about to shoot and kill him. When Krishna saw this, once again using his magic, he made Arjuna's chariot sink a few inches into the earth.** The weapon knocked off Arjuna's crown and made him faint for some time, but it did not enter his head as intended. **Many times, Krishna did such things.**

In the Kurukshetra war that Arjuna would have surely lost if it had not been for Krishna's protection. An important example of this would be at the end of the war, after the Pandavas won **and Krishna insisted Arjuna get down from the chariot first.** Arjuna

obeyed and got down. **But as soon as Krishna got down and the flag of Hanuman flew away, the chariot burst into flames and was reduced to ash.** A shocked Arjuna asked Krishna why this happened. Krishna replied saying the **arrows of Drona and Karna had already burnt the chariot, but it remained intact because of Krishna's presence.** It burnt down as soon as he stepped out of it, which is why he insisted Arjuna step down first.

But even though he had a large part to play in the Pandavas winning the Kurukshetra war, **Krishna remained humble even in victory.** He congratulated Yudhishtira, and gave credit for the victory to the brothers, never once mentioning his role.

Krishna's view on Mahabharata:

Krishna in Mahabharata says, "What they are doing is adharma; **what we are doing is also adharma, but we are doing it with an intention of establishing dharma.** They are doing it **with the intention of establishing adharma.**" It is not a question of right and wrong. It is a question of purpose, and of whether you would be successful within the limitations of the law or not. He did not say what he was doing was right – he knew it was wrong. But what he was trying to achieve was right. That is why he did all this.

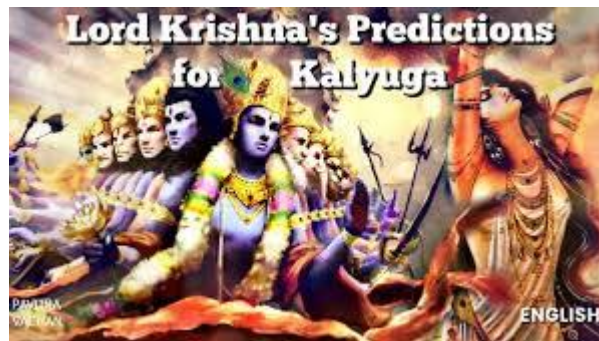


Krishna explaining Kaliyuga:

After winning the Kurukshetra all the pandavas returned to Hastinapur. All the pandavas want to know about Kaliyuga, so Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva approached Krishna and asked about Kaliyuga, then **Krishna aimed arrows in all four directions and left them** and asked pandavas to get back the arrows.

Arjuna saw the first arrow and while returning he heard a melodious sound and he went to see what it is, that was the **sound of a Swallow which is killing a live Rabbit**, by seeing it he got shocked and asked Krishna. Krishna said in Kaliyuga some of the **knowledge persons** instead of using their talent for the good they use for **betraying poor and innocent people.**

Bhima found the second arrow near group of wells in which **four wells are full of water and the middle fifth well is dried**, shocked Bhima asked Krishna what is happening? why the middle well is dry? Krishna replied in **Kaliyuga rich becomes richer and poor becomes poorer**, in the way middle well is dried and the four wells are overflowing with water.



Nakula finding the third arrow saw a cow which is over licking its calf such that the calf is bleeding, Krishna explained in Kaliyuga due to **parents over love they spoil their own children** as the cow over licking the calf.

Sahadeva will find the last arrow where from a huge Mountain a **big Rock starts rolling down, on the way it destroys all big trees and comes to halt by hitting a small plant**. On seeing this shocking scenario Sahadeva asks Krishna what is this? Krishna replied in Kaliyuga **one who loses consciousness, cannot be stooped from destruction** by his property, wealth. **It is only possible by belief in god.**

In this way Krishna explained the Kaliyuga and its effects.

Learning Output:

By doing this project, I came to know many new stories of Krishna. I came to know the relation of Pandavas and Krishna and the entry of Krishna into Mahabharata and the reason Krishna saving Draupadi at Draupadi vastrabharan. I found the reason for Krishna being on the side of Pandavas during Kurukshetra war and the Krishna's explanation for Mahabharata. I came to know the Krishna's opinion on Kaliyuga and the solution for the problems faced by people in Kaliyuga.

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