

Title of the project: Sages Mentioned in the Mahabharat

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT-

I hereby thank Amrita, School Of Engineering, Chennai and my faculty Dr.Shreehari V.G for giving me an opportunity to do this project on the famous epic Mahabharat, written by sage Veda Vyasa. I have chosen, Sages mentioned in Mahabharat as the title of my project which has given the insight into the sages and their roles that are equally important as the main characters in the epic Mahabharat.

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## INTRODUCTION:

One of the major Sanskrit epics of ancient India is Mahabharat written by sage Veda Vyasa and the other being Ramayan. Together these two epics form the Ithihasa. Mahabharat has 1,00,000 verses in Anustubh meter (a form of Sanskrit poetry in which each line has eight syllables) and is described as the “the longest poem ever written” composed in 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE.

The Śloka hemistich		1 <sup>st</sup> Pāda		2 <sup>nd</sup> Pāda	
		I.	II.	III.	IV.
पथ्या (Pathyā)	1.	≡ ≡ ≡ ≡	⌣ _ _ ≡		
विपुला (Vipulā)	2.	a. ≡ _ ⌣ _	⌣ ⌣ ⌣ ≡	≡ ≡ ≡ ≡	⌣ _ ⌣ =
		b. ≡ ⌣ _ _			
	3.	≡ _ ⌣ _	_ ⌣ ⌣ ≡		
	4.	≡ _ ⌣ _	_ _ _ ≡		

Fig.1. The format of Anustubh meter

The first version of Mahabharat written by sage Veda Vyasa is called as Jaya that has 8000 verses. The second version is called Bharat that has 24,000 verses. The final version, that is known today is Mahabharat with 1,00,000 verses.

Mahabharat is closely related to today’s world. It is the journey of Dharma to annihilate the vice.

Chitrashikandins are the seven great sages (sapta Maharishi) namely- Marichi, Atri, Angirus, Pulasthya, Pulaha, Kratu and Vashishta. It is described in Mahabharat’s Shantiparva (12.322.27).

“Maricir Atrayangirisow Pulasthyah Pulahah Kratuh

Vasisthasca mahateja ite citrashindinaha”

The sages that were mentioned in Mahabharat that are mentioned in my project are:

1. Veda Vyasa
2. Agasthya
3. Dhurvasa
4. Akritavrana
5. Angirus
6. Asita

7. Atri
8. Ayodhadoymya
9. Bharatwaj
10. Bhrigu
11. Bhrihadaswa
12. Chyavana
13. Dadicha
14. Gauthama

#### SAGES MENTIONED IN MAHABHARAT:

1. VEDA VYASA:



*Fig.2. Veda Vyasa*

Son of sage Parashara and Satyawati (who is the wife of Shantanu). He is believed to be one among the 24 incarnations of Lord Vishnu and his presence in the Dwaparyuga as an incarnation of maha Vishnu. He is the author of Mahabharat and character of the epic, Mahabharat. The original version narrated by Veda Vyasa and written by Lord Ganesha was called Jaya which had 8000 verses. The second version was called Bharat that has 24,000 verses

same as Ramayan. The final version was named Mahabharat with 1 lakh verses which is currently known to us today.

He was first named Krishna Dwaipayana (meaning: a dark child delivered on a river island) and was born in Damauli of Tanahi district (5000 years ago currently in Nepal). From a very tender age, he revealed to parents the purpose of his life- that he should go to the forest and practice 'Akhand Tapas'- continuous penance for which Satyawati was against at first but accepted with one condition that he would appear before her whenever she wished for his presence. Veda Vyasa's father, sage Parashara wrote Vishnu-Purana which was later reformed by Vyasa.

Both his half-brothers died. Satyawati to have her lineage as the kings of the kuru clan approaches Veda Vyasa for help. With his help, Ambika gives birth to Dhritarashtra who is blind, Ambalika gives birth to Pandu who is a pale weakling and a maid gives birth to Vidur who is healthy and intelligent but is not a royal lineage. Hence, he is the biological father of Dhritarashtra, Pandu and Vidur.

Vyasa was impressed by Gandhari's devotion towards her husband and gives her a boon that he would have 100 sons and a daughter. When Gandhari comes to know that Kunti had given birth to a boy before her, she gets infuriated and pounds her stomach and ball of flesh comes out her. It was Vyasa who divides this flesh into 101 parts and keeps them into earthen pots for incubation. Thus, 100 sons and a daughter are born (Kauravas). He had prophesied the fate of Draupathi- about her marrying with five men and also her cruel fate. It was sage Veda Vyasa who had given the power to Sanjay to narrate the events in the battlefield of Kurukshetra to Dhritarashtra. Other than Mahabharat, he also wrote Brahma Sutras, 18 Puranas and was the one who established the system of teaching them through 'Upakhyanas' as well as the three paths of Karma, Upasana(devotion) and Jnana(knowledge). His last work was the Bhagavatam. There is a temple for Veda Vyasa that is located in Neerattupuram near Chakkulathukavu Sree Bhagavathi Temple in Alappuzha district, Kerala on the bank of the river Pampa.



*Fig.3. Chakkulathukavu Sree Bhagavathi Temple*

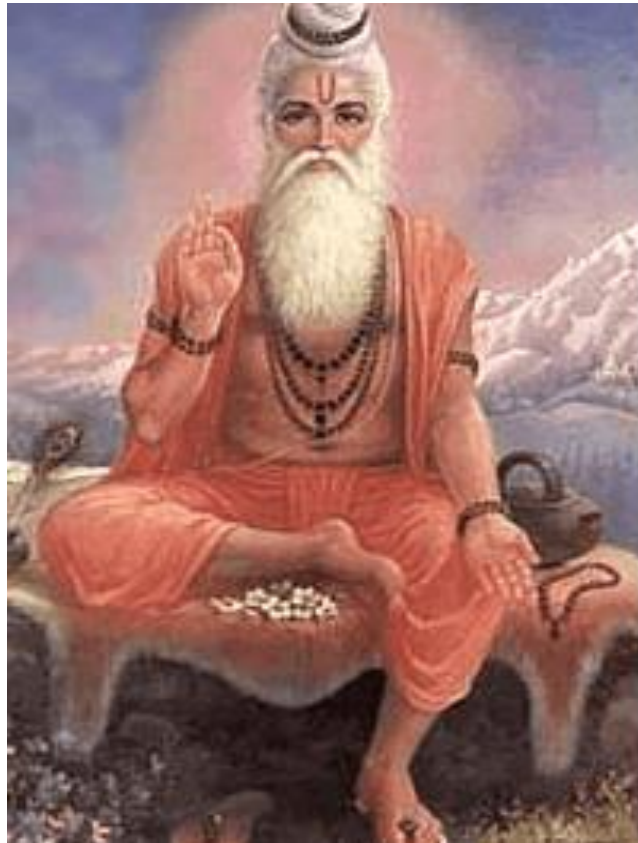
## 2. Agasthya

He gave lord Rama the bow of lord Vishnu. Pandavas got acquainted with his life story while on pilgrimage to holy places. His wife Lopamudra was also a great sage. He is described in Mahabharat as a boy who learns Vedas listening to parents while he is in the womb and is born into this world reciting hymns. The story of Agasthya (Agasthyo pakhyana) is narrated by rishi Lomasha to Yudishthir during the latter's pilgrimage (Vanaparva, Thirthayatra parva). Agasthya once saw his deceased ancestors hanging in pit with heads downwards, he asked what is the matter and they said "Oh Agasthya! If you get a good son, we may be saved from hell". Not finding a wife worthy of him, he created a girl for himself and gave it to the king of Vidarbha who took care of the child, Lopamudra. When she grew, Agasthya married her. Lopamudra asked for wealth. Agasthya then goes to king Shrutarvan to beg for wealth. King Shrutarvan had equal amount of expenditure and income. So, the rishi went to Vrandanashwa. He also had equal amount of income and expenditure. Therefore, Agasthya, Shrutarvan and king Vrandanaswa went to Purukutsa's son Trasadausu. He also had equal amount of expenditure and income. So, they went to Ilwala (Daitya-Asura). Ilwala was a destroyer of brahmanas. His brother was Asura Vathapi who could assume any form at will. Normally he would be transformed into a ram and cooked for brahmanas. After they ate, Ilwala would call out his brother and he would come out of the stomach of brahmanas and the brahmanas would be killed. When Agasthya went to Ilwala he saw the sad state of the sages. Asura Vathapi was transformed into a ram and cooked for them. Agasthya ate up the whole of the meal supplied by Vathapi transformed into a ram. After the dinner was over Ilwala, called his brother but he did not come out. Agasthya said "I have already digested the great asura, how could he come out?" Then Ilwala asked "for what have you come here and what can I do for you" and Agasthya asked for the wealth. He got the wealth and gave it Lopamudra. Later they had a son Dridhasu. The story of Agasthya stopping the Vindhya mountains from growing and Agasthya drinking up the ocean is also narrated by rishi Lomasha.



*Fig.4. Agasthya's aashram in Maharashtra towns- Agasthyapuri and Akole*

### 3. Dhurvasa



*Fig.5. sage Dhurvasa*

His parents were Atri and Anushya. He was born as a result of lord Shiva's boon as a son. As he was born out of lord Shiva's fierce energy, he is known for his temper and his affinity for curses. Dhurvasa is known to give boon to those who please him. Kunti was entrusted by the king Kuntibhoja to take care of Dhurvasa during his stay with them. Kunti served the sage with great dedication. Before leaving he taught Kunti Atharva Veda mantras which enables a woman to invoke any God to beget children by them. Kunti wanted to test the mantra and invoked lord Surya from whom she bore her first son Karna. In Shiva purana, it is said that Durvasa's clothes were carried away by the river's current. Draupathi who was nearby, gave her own cloth to the sage. Dhurvasa blessed her by saying that she wouldn't lack clothes at the time of need. It is said that it was due to his blessing that the Kauravas were unable to strip off her clothes in the gambling hall. He had other than Draupathi granted a boon to Duryodhan. But Duryodhan secretly wanted Dhurvasa to curse Pandavas in anger. So, he asked the sage to visit the Pandavas after Draupathi had eaten her share of meal. He knew that Pandavas would not have anything to feed him. This is why Dhurvasa and his disciples visit Pandavas to eat after Draupathi's meal. She prays to Krishna for help and he appears and helps them.



#### 4. Akritavrana

He is a close companion of Parashurama. He is the disciple of Parashuram. He comes in Vanaparva of Mahabharat chapter 116. He is set to talk about the story of Jamadagni. He had no family or sustenance and he was also a charioteer of Parashurama. In Udhogaparva, Akritavrana meets Krishna on the way to Hastinapur (Chapter 83) and joins him. When they reach the Sabha, Krishna asks Dhritarashtra for the rishis to be seated and among those named are Parashurama and Akritavrana. It is said that Parashurama advises Duryodhan and later in the slokhas only Akritavrana's name is mentioned as advising Duryodhana. It is said that Akritavrana meets Bheeshma on the bed of arrows.

#### 5. Angirus



*Fig.6. Angirus in his aashram*

He is a sage and mind born son of lord Bramha. One of the 10 progenitors of mankind. The story of Angirus is found in Mahabharat. He became more famous from his story in Mahabharat in that story Agni asked Angirus to function as fire but the sage was fair and prayed to Agni to be the real fire and remove darkness and that he would be chosen his adopted son. Thus, Angirus is one of the Satarishis of the first Manvanthra.

Angirus had many wives including Shubha, Smriti, Devasena, Vasudha etc. he had 7 sons and 8 daughters with Shubha. As per Mahabharat's Vanaparva chapters 218 to 223. He was also father to many. According to Mahabharat's Sabhaparva chapter 63, Sudhanva (Angirus' son) was pleased with Prahalad's integrity. Once Angirus burned with power of his meditation and the whole world become alight. The world ignores Agni and so Agni hid in the forest. Angirus consoled him and agreed to be his first son. This is mentioned in Mahabharat chapter 217. In Udhogaparva chapter 18 verses 527 Indra blesses Angirus to become as famous as other Vangiras. During the Mahabharat's war Dhrona started using his weapons blindly Angirus and other sages advised him not to and warned that he was nearing his end. According to Anushasana parva chapter 25 verses 7 to 71, Angirus describes many like Pushkara, Prabhasa,

Devika etc, in chapter 106 verses 11 to 16, Angirus preaches about Upavasas, in chapter 127 verse 8 he speaks about secrets of Dharma, in chapter 153 verse 8/ verse 3 he is known to have drunk the ocean dry once, in chapter 153 verse 8 he has cursed Agni and so he had started giving out smoke. In chapter 92 verse 6 of Vanaparva Angirus rescues lord Surya. In Ashwamedikaparva chapter 4 verse 22, Angirus performs many Yagnas for king Avikshith.

#### 6. Asita

The story of sage Asita Devala and Jaigisavya in Mahabharat (9.48) says self-realisation is more important than ritual and poojas. Jaigisavya was a wandering sage and Asita lived near Adityathirtha. Asita strictly performs rituals and poojas while Jaigisavya never bothered about it. Many times, Jaigisavya disappeared and returned after some time. Asita was perplexed by his strange behaviour. One day sage Asita realised that Jaigisavya can travel to different worlds and he follows him but he couldn't enter the world of brahman (eternal world) and falls down. So, he asks Jaigisavya to teach him moksha dharma (samkya-yoga) to reach salvation.

He denounced gambling and is a disciple of Vyasa. Asita was a powerful sage who explained to his father 1500000 verses from the Mahabharat. He was one of the members in the snake sacrifice of Maharaja Janamejaya. He was also present during the coronation ceremony of Maharaja Yudishthir along with other great Rishis. Translation of SB canto 1.9.6-7 all the sages like Parvata muni, Naradha, Doymya, Vyasa the incarnation of god, Bhradasva, Bharatwaj and Parashuram and disciples, Vashishtha, Indra Pramadha, Trita, Grisamada, Asita, Kakasivan, Gauthama, Atri, Kausika and Sudharsana were present.

#### 7. Atri



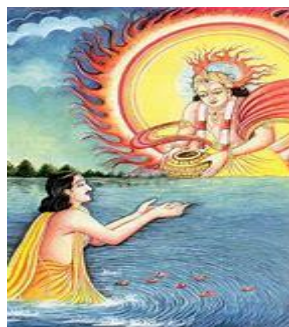
*Fig.7 Atri with Anushya*

Author of many Vedic hymns and son of lord Bramha. A few verses of Shantiparva of Mahabharat report the no. of Bramha's mind born sons and Atri is one of them, second of the premier seven sages born after Marichi. According to Mahabharat, Anushya was his wife and there are many legends about them in Mahabharat. refer to Anushasanaparva where after falling out with her husband Atri, Anushya left him and sort recourse to Lord Shiva. She did severe tapasya and Shiva gave her the boon of a son who is Sage Durvasa. Since he was born out of Shiva's fierce energy, he was famous for his temper and affinity for curses.

The Mahabharat mentions Atri advising an emperor called Nimi. Nimi was Datta Treeya's son. Nimi's son died after living for 1000 years. Nimi conducted shraadh for his son. According to Mahabharat Anushasana parva chapter 91 verses 20 to 44 Atri advises Nimi on the significance of shraadh. And according to Mahabharat Shantiparva chapter 206 verses 6, Atri had a son called Prachinabarhis in addition to Datta Treeya, Duhurvasa and Chandra. We have already seen that sages advised Dhrona to stop the war and Atri was one of them. Shalyaparva chapter 43 verse 47 mentions that Atri was the chief sage in Rajasuya yagna conducted by Soma.

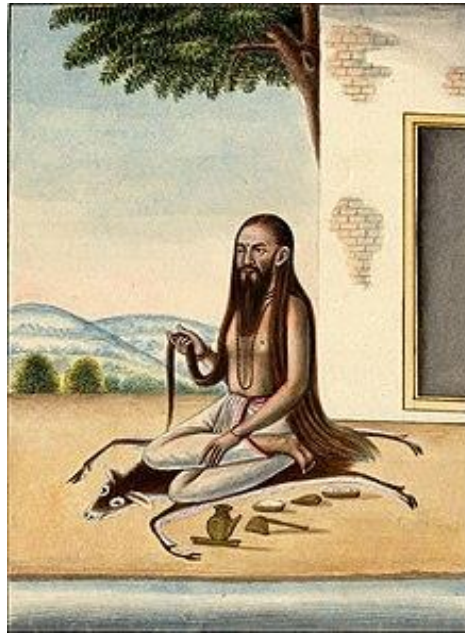
#### 8. Ayodhadoymya

A great sage whose disciples were Veda, Upamanyu and Aruni. When Pandavas March towards the forest for the 13 year exile a lot of Brahmanas followed them. Yudisthir pleaded them to return but they refused to return and said would source their own food. On hearing this, Yudisthir asked how can I let you procure your own food and cried. Later, he approached Doymya and asked "Brahmanas wish to follow me in the forest but I don't have any means to sustain them. Tell me what should I do?" Doymya advised Yudisthir to meditate to Lord Surya and also taught him 108 names of the sun. Upon meditation, Lord Surya appeared before Yudisthir and gave him a vessel (Akshaya Patra). He said the vessel will feed all for 12 years henceforth and will give inexhaustible supply of each day until, Draupati part-takes her share of the food.



*Fig.8. Yudisthir receives Akshaya Patra from lord Surya*

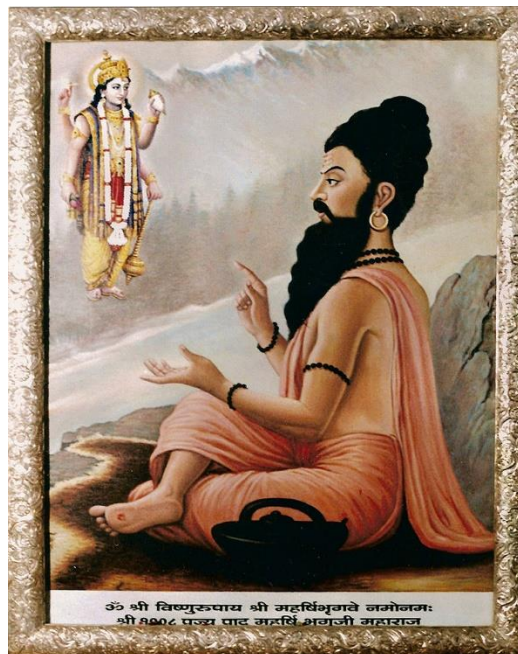
## 9. Bharatwaj



*Fig.9. sage Bharatwaj*

Son of Bhruhaspati and father of Dhronacharya and grandfather of Ashwathama. He was a military preceptor of Pandavas and Kauravas. He was the descendent of sage Angirus.

## 10. Bhrigu



*Fig.10. Bhrigu curses Lord Vishnu*

In Mahabharat, he is not considered as the son of lord Bramha. He wrote Bhrigu Samhitha. Krishna in Bhagavat Geetha is said to have said that amongst the sages, he was Sage Bhrigu. He had tried to stop the battle of Mahabharat and is believed to be one of the narrators of

Mahabharat. It is said that it was maharishi Bhrgu who cursed Lord Vishnu to be born on Earth many times and suffer the pain of birth and death.

#### 11. Bhrihadaswa

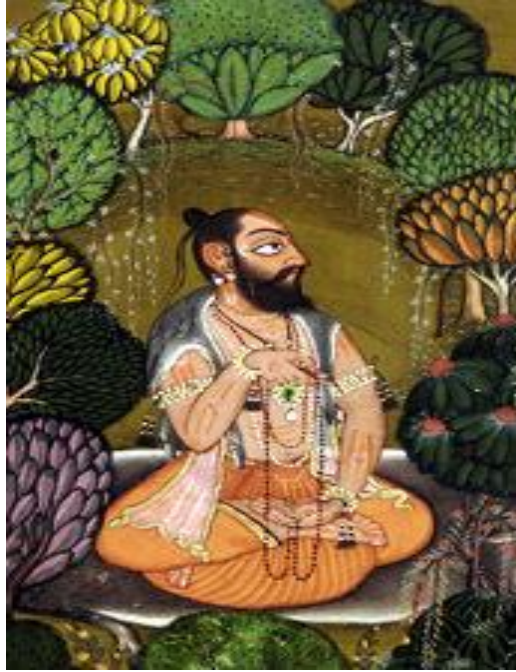
He is the sage who visited Pandavas in their forest hermitage and reminded them of king Nala of Nishada. Nala-Damayanthi story is found in book 3 chapter 78 as recited by Brihadawa.

“Brihadaswa uvacha

Prasanthe tu purae hristhe sampravrtte mahotsave

Mahatya seenaya Raja Damayanthim upanayat..... Up to sloka 23”

#### 12. Chyavana



*Fig.11.sage Chyavana*

He is the son of Bhrgu. This story of Sukanya (Chyavana is married to Sukanya) is narrated by rishi Lomasha to Yudisthir during the pilgrimage in Vanaparva Theerthayatra parva. Sukanya was Sharyathi's daughter. She approached the Ant hill where Bhrgu's son was seated in meditation. She saw the eyes of Chyavana from the ant hill and out of curiosity pierced it with thorns. He got angry and cursed them. Sharyathi asked him to forgive his daughter. Chyavana wanted to marry Sukanya and hence they got married and she served him with utmost love and care. There is a story of Chyavana becoming young again due to the boon of Ashwini twins to Sukanya.



### 13. Dadicha



*Fig.12.Sage Dadicha*

Dadicha is also known as Dadyancha or Dadyanga. He donated his bones to the gods to create thunderbolt weapon known as Vajra which is the weapon of Indra. In Shantiparva, Dadichi is being mentioned by Vaisampayan in reply to the question of Janamejaya. Dadichi's guru Sukracharya.

### 14. Gauthama

As per Mahabharat Aardhiparva chapter 139 verse 2 Sharadvan (Gauthama's son) was born with arrows in his hand. As per Sabhaparva, Gauthama lived in Bramha's court. Vanaparva chapter 298 verse 11 says the Gauthama blessed Satyavan's father Dhyumatsena that his eye sight would be restored. Gauthama was also one of the sages who visited Bheeshma while he was on the bed of arrows. It is said that Gauthama meditated on the top of Pariyatra mountain for 60,000 years and Yama appeared before him as per Mahabharat Shantiparva chapter 129 verse 5. In chapter 352 verse 23 of the same parva it is said that Gauthama cursed Indra that his moustache would turn green. Anushasanaparva chapter 93 verse 94 says that when Gauthama was born the radiance from his body dispelled the darkness and so he got his name. In the same parvas Gauthama is said to be one of the sages who swore that had not stolen Agasthya's lotuses.

### CONCLUSION:

Mahabharat is closely related to today's world. Lord Krishna reiterates time and again in the Mahabharata that the war against the Kauravas was not for the limited objective of punishing those particular evil doers but to set an example for society for all time to come that truth triumphs over evil.

#### LEARNING OUTCOME:

From the sages of Mahabharat I learnt many moral values from the stories mentioned in the epic. I also came to know that Indian society was scientifically sound as well which can be understood from the story of Dronacharya's birth from the pot (invitro fertilisation).

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