

## *Drishti* from Mahabharata

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### Abstract

In Tamil there is a proverb “*KALLADI PATTALUM KANNADI PADAKUDATHU*”, which means throwing stone attack harms the body but evil eye causes severe worse damage to growth. *Kannadi padakudathu* means evil eye should not fall on us. This evil eye is called as *Drishti*. Some people are of the opinion that this *Drishti* is generally a “Superstitious” phenomenon. At the same time many people are of the opinion that *Drishti* will bring severe damage, so that we have to do *Drishti parikaram* to avoid bad eye vision. Even in Hindi it is called as “Nazar” and say “Nazar laga” when they feel they got an evil eye on them. The babies below 5–6 years of age are protected from “*Drishti*” with great care by mothers. Mothers place a small black dot on child's both cheeks to drive away this “Evil eye” or “*drishti*” or “Nazar”. This perception is not limited to Telugu or Tamil people, but it is present all over India in general.

People assume that this *Drishti* creates a variety of problems such as depression, unclear thinking or malfunction of an organ which lead to even further difficulties such as addiction, financial problems, or chest pain. It is believed that the targets are usually people who entertain negative personality traits such as anger, hatred, jealousy, lust, greed etc. It is believed that when people are jealous at our growth in life, at our prosperity, our good looks, they do not have to physically abuse us or make us realize their enmity outwardly, but their subconscious mind gives negative radiation towards us and spoils our growth.

This paper presents how the “*Drishti*” plays a major role in Kurukshetra war. In Kurukshetra war, by Sanjaya’s Divya-*Drishti*, **Dhritarashtra** came to know from Sanjaya that the Kaurava’s army was the largest army when compared with the Pandava’s army. Also, the Kaurava’s Commander-in-chiefs were very brave and unbeatable commanders. The initial war strategy and military formation of Kauravas were extremely good. These things made **Dhritarashtra** felt very proud of his son’s army and this excess of love and pride damaged the growth of his children. The love and pride of **Dhritarashtra** made a parental “*Drishti*” to Kauravas which made severe damages and at last they were defeated and all his sons including Duriyodhana were killed.

**Keywords:** Mahabharata, Kauravas, Pandavas, Kurukshetra War, Divya-*Drishti*, *Drishti* Pariharam, Veda Vyasa, Lord Krishna.

## 1. Introduction

*Mahabharata* is one of the two major Hindu epics of an ancient India, and the other being Ramayana. Mahabharata deals with an account of the life and deeds of several generations of a ruling dynasty called the Guru/Kuru clan. The Kuru Kingdom was divided into two and **Dhritarashtra** was the King of the Kuru Kingdom with its capital at Hastinapur. Dhritarashtra was born blind. The sons of Dhritarashtra were called Kauravas. Yudhishtira and his brothers were called as Pandavas and their capital was Indraprastha.

The main story revolves around the two branches of a family. In the childhood period of the children there was no hatred among them. They lived together and enjoyed the fraternity well. Duriyodhanan, the eldest son of Kauravas envied and had a fear that will rule their kingdom later after the death of his father **Dhritarashtra** - a blind man the younger brother of Pandu. Yudhishtira, and his brothers were son of Pandu. So, Duriyodhanan attempted very many ways to kill Pandavas. Shakuni stood firmly to support Duriyodhanan and took the active role against the Pandavas.

Shakuni also known as Saubala, as an extremely high intelligent, crafty and devious man and brother of Gandhari and hence he is the maternal uncle for Duriyodhana. Shakuni was one of the greatest illusionists. Shakuni is considered as the unparalleled villain in Mahabharata, causes the deaths of thousands and lakhs of deaths, taking vengeance in the greatest Kurukshetra war. Kanthari begot one hundred sons to Thiruthirastra. They are called Gowravas. Kunthi gave birth to five sons to Pandu the younger brother of Thiruthirastra. They are called the Pandavas.

The wicked seed was already with Duriyodhanan and he developed hatred against the cousins Pandavas. The Kurukshetra war was a war inbetween the Kauravas, led by Duriyodhana and their cousins, the Pandavas, led by Yudhishtira for the kingdom of Hastinapura. It involved several ancient kingdoms participating as allies of the rival groups. Central to the epic is an account of a war that took place between two rival families belonging to this guru clan. The Kurukshetra war was considered to be the most devastating and grand battle in ancient Indian epics. The Kurukshetra War ran for for 18 days. It is also called the Mahabharata War. It was a war described in the Hindu epic between Pandavas and Kauravas.

## 2. Divya-Drishti was a Boon to Sanjaya by Veda Vyasa on the Request of Dhritarashtra:

Sanjaya was the son of Gavalyagana and Sanjaya was a Sanskrit name which means victory. Sanjaya was a charioteer and adviser of Dhritarashtra, the King of Hastinapur. A loyal, humble and devoted man was Sanjaya. The king Dhritarashtra wanted to see the warfare by sitting at Hastinapura. Dhritarashtra approached Veda Vyasa and Dhritarashtra requested Veda Vyasa to grant Sanjaya divine vision so that Dhritarashtra could see the war. Dhritarashtra asked that the boon Divya-Drishti to be given to Sanjaya, his charioteer. Sanjaya with the boon of Divya-Drishti described the day by day battle.

Sanjay, through his divine vision, which he was blessed with by his guru Maharishi Ved Vyas, had the knowledge of everything that was happening during the battle. Sanjay acted as the 'eyes' for the blind king Dhritarashtra for warfare. Sanjay was blessed with **Divya-Drishti** by

Vyasa. He could see the events taking place at a faraway place in real time. It is more or less live telecast of today's cricket or football match.

The war of Mahabharata is structured in the form of a dialogue between the King Dhritarashtra (who was born blind) and Sanjaya having a divine vision, known as Divya-Drishti. Sanjaya narrates each incident of the Kurukshetra War from the beginning. In the beginning, Sanjaya gave a description of the various continents of the Earth, the other planets, and focuses on the Indian Subcontinent, then gave an elaborate list of hundreds of kingdoms, tribes, provinces, cities, towns, villages, rivers, mountains, forests, etc. of the (ancient) Indian Subcontinent (Bharata Varsha). He also explained the military formations adopted by each side.

### 3. Kurukshetra War Strategy <sup>(6, 7)</sup>:

Sanjaya explained the war strategy of Mahabharat war which was taken place at Kurukshetra which was shown in Table-1. He also explained the military formation of Kauravas army and it was better than Pandavas army in all aspects.

<b>KAURAVAS ARMY</b>	<b>PANDAVAS ARMY</b>
<b>Overlord:</b> <b>Duriyodhana</b>	<b>Overlord:</b> <b>Yudhisthira.</b>
<b>Commander-in-chief:</b> Bhishma Drona Karna Shalya	<b>Commander-in-chief:</b> Dhrishtadyumana
<b>Divisional Commanders:</b> Jeyadratha Kripa Kritavarma Bhurishravas Bahlika Bhagadatta Sudakshina	<b>Divisional Commanders:</b> Drupada Virata Abhimanyu Satyaki Shikandi Nakul Sahadeva
<b>Strategist:</b> Shakuni	<b>Strategist:</b> Krishna
<b>Strength</b>	<b>Strength</b>
11 Akshauhinis 2,40,570 Chariots and chariot-riders. 2,40,570 Elephants and Elephant-riders. 7,21,710 Horses and Horse-riders.	7 Akshauhinis 1,53,090 Chariots and chariot-riders. 1,53,090 Elephants and Elephant-riders. 4,59,270 Horses and Horse-riders.

1,202,850 Infantry. (Total 2,405,700 Soldiers).	765,450 Infantry. (Total 1,530,900 Soldiers).
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**Table-1: War Strategy between Army of Kauravas and Army of Pandavas in Kurukshetra War (6,7).**

#### **4. The King Dhritarashtra Parental Drishti gave Downfall to Kauravas Army**

For Kauravas army, Bhishma was the first Commander – in - Chief. He was a great warrior and was trained by Lord Vishnu’s incarnation Parshuram in warfare. No one in this world can defeat him in war. The second Commander – in - Chief for Kauravas was **Drona**. Drona was a brahmin, and the **Guru of both the Pandav’s and Kauravs**. He was also a student of Parshuram, and nearly if not equally as powerful as Bhishma. No one in this world can defeat him in war. The third is the Commander – in - Chief **Karna**. Karna was the great friend of the Kauravas and considered to be **one of the world’s greatest archers**. He was considered to be the best archer and he can defeat Arjuna. Interestingly, he too was a student of Parshuram. Karna was born to the Pandava’s mother Kunti before her marriage but was abandoned in a river and raised by charioteers.

Very important thing which was noticed by Dhritarashtra was the Kauravas army had got Centralized power system. The Kuru clan was considered as the greatest empire of the time, whereas the Pandavas had no wealth. No power of their own.

The Kauravas army of 11 Akshauhinis is formed by the kingdom of Hastinapura, whereas Pandava Army was a coalition of 7 Akshauhinis.

1 Akshauhini was a regiment which comprised of:

- 65,610 horsemen (cavalry).
- 21,870 chariots.
- 21,870 elephants.
- 109,305 foot soldiers (infantry).

Dhritarashtra felt pride towards **Duriyodhana**. Thus, the Divya-Drishti was converted as Parental Drishti to Duriyodhana because of love and pride. This was the main reason for the downfall of Duriyodhana (Kauravas). This Drishti made severe damages to Kauravas and atlast they were defeated and all Dhritarashtra sons including Duriyodhana were killed.

The battle raged for 18 days. The army totalled 18 *akshauhinis*, 7 on the Panadavas side and 11 on the Kauravas side (1 *akshauhini* = 21,870 chariots + 21,870 elephants + 65,610 horses + 109,350 soldiers on foot). Casualties on both sides were high. After 18 days the Pandavas had won the war. Duryodhan and all of the Kauravas had died. The now-dead Karna was revealed to be a son of Kunti's before her marriage to Pandu, and thus, the eldest Pandava and the rightful

heir to the throne. The grand old grandfather, Bheeshma, their teacher Drona were dead. In about 18 days, the entire country lost almost three generations of its men.

## 6. What is Drishti? And Drishti Pariharam <sup>(10, 11, 12)</sup>

The word drishti is not new to us Indians. “Dishti” is the slang word for “Drushti” which means “Eye Vision” in Telugu or “Bad eye vision” in Tamil and this evil eye is assumed to lead to heart-burning because of jealousy. In order to avoid Drishti, Drishti pariharam is performed by Hindus all over India as ritual. Drishti pariharam is a ritual performed in southern states. When a person has done some remarkable achievements, it is believed that slowly Drishti eye falls on him and damages his growth, it is believed. To avoid this Drishti, ritual is performed as Drishti pariharam. Drishti Dosha was performed to remove negative thoughts of others. It is believed that Drishti creates negative vibrations to our body. Salt, lemon, coconuts, and chilli are meant to absorb vibrations. Hence, people rotate along with these things around their body and this is assumed to absorb all the vibrations.

## 7. Drishti is Real - One School of Thought

The word drishti is not new to us Indians. It is called the evil eyes or evil sight <sup>(13, 14)</sup>. The drishti is caused by the negative and evil thoughts that will generate negative vibrations towards us by other people. Drishti parikaram can be done on Thursdays, Sundays, on Pournami and Amavasi day. In Tamil Nadu and in many southern states of India mothers or grandmothers perform a ritual called as ‘suthi podrathu’ wherein she makes any family member or even all members of a family to sit or stand. Mostly it is done by elderly people. They use red chillies, camphor and they used to rotate this to the person from forehead to feet thrice and in reverse. "Arathi" with turmeric water, with which we welcome home the newly married couple/VIP and after every auspicious function at home is also some sort of suttippodal. **(Fig.1)** They burn this outside the house. It is believed that the evil eye has gone after this. It is also done with big pumpkins **(Fig.2)**. You might have seen the pumpkin in street end which has been broken after construction of new house. It is also the act of “thristi kallikrathu”.

When red chilli and salt burn with crackling noise, the grandma makes a comment “see, how much of evil eye on my dear child?”. Then siren sounds all clear and household comes back to normalcy. What I have described is something basic and many grandmothers perform with some variations.



**Fig.1: Arathi with Betal leaf and Camphor.**



**Fig.2: Pumpkin with Burning Camphor.**

Coconuts are usually an offering to God and are present at almost every Hindu temple and during ceremonies. Lemons with chillies are supposed to ward off the evil eye. If you are in India, you will see a lot of these dangling behind trucks for Drishti Dosha. **Tanjore Paintings** Kan Drishti Ganapathi was used in houses as Drishti Pariharam. Many people believe that the **high quality traditional artwork of Tanjore painting** divert the evil eye vision.

### **8. Drishti is Superstitious – Second School of Thought**

Usually, Religion and Science are considered as opposite poles. Religions and Drishti are based on 'beliefs', because most of the claims cannot be backed by facts. 'Science' as basic knowledge, source of information and foundation of systems. Science is not about your beliefs; it is about the facts. Man is a logical animal programmed and they are expecting answer for everything. For every act he wants to know why, and it is a good method. They are thinking that these are all superstitions. Similarly, they are thinking that Drishti and Drishti pariharam are all superstitions and they won't believe. Science disproves it, for the very simple reason that the eye doesn't emit anything: not light, not laser beams, not evil intent. The eye is a *passive* receptor of light. A **superstition** is a belief and practice resulting from ignorance, fear of the unknown, trust in magic. Drishti is also a superstitious phenomenon and there is no scientific proof in it.

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