



EXPLORING PSYCHOLOGICAL RESISTANCE OF WOMAN IN MAHA SWETA DEVI'S FICTION

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ABSTRACT

Since ancient time caste, class, and gender systems are prevailing in our society. Traditionally women have been considered as a secondary status in patriarchal social structure. Whenever a woman is try to raise her voice against outrageous corruption, then this society tries to subdue her voice. Much study has been done, but on ground level yet society is not free from these systems. This paper aims to explore compelling narratives of Maha Sweta Devi. She presents image of a strong women in her literary works. She uses her writing as a tool to give support to the supportless subalterns. This paper explores unheard voice of Dalit women through her selected works 'Rudali' and 'Draupdi'. Though, the Indian constitution provides law of equality, freedom and justice to each citizen of India. But the question is that how many women are use that? Many of them are not aware of their constitutional rights. This study highlights the discrimination of Dalit women and violations of human rights in Bengal and other states of India. The Dalit women are one the most oppressed section in our country, women attacked by society twice, for being a woman, being a Dalit and poor. "Human rights are women's rights and women's rights are human rights, once and for all"-Hillary Clinton.(I.J.C.R.T. by. Michael

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Introduction

Mahasweta Devi was a social activist and a great writer, she belonged to the post-colonial literary world of India. She was a keen observer of patriarchal and feudal system of society. She had a strong bond with lower sections of society, and she well aware of the problems of their life. Marginalized people have to bear the brutality of elite class. They had to live their life according to the wishes of elite class. Moreover, M.D was a blend of social activist and writing. Through her narratives she maintains a connection between ancient and modern women. Her short story 'Draupadi' relates to the incident of our society, for instance the rape case of Calcutta and incident of Manipur reminds me the story of Draupadi. This is a big slap on our global cultured society. Are we cultured? A doctor lady on her duty is not safe, so how can we make

assure a Dalit section of society. Dalit are consider by society as polluting and polluted. Dalit women are most voice less victim in society. They oppressed twice for being Dalit for being poor women.

According to feminist theory, empowerment has its roots in both individual and social change (Kabeer 2001, Shah 2011). Mostly characters of M.S. Devi's are go through from the major transformation in their life, from victim to a fighter. The women who are unable to save her loss who eventually becomes a strong character, and their trauma and wounds in forced upon them and turn into power. We noticed this in her both works. One of the Purans has the following verse: "In the krita yuga Renuka was a kritya, in the satya yuga Sita was kritya, in the Dwapar yuga Drupadi was kritya, and in kalyuga's there are krityas in every house." (Breast Stories,77.) Her

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novel shows the condition of society of her time, Devi narrates her story against the antique epic of Mahabharata, Naxalite movement (1967-71), the Bangladesh liberation war 1971 of west Bengal. Devi was a keen observer of society; she was not a writer of a room the whole phenomenon is showed in her writing. Her novels are mirror of social realism, caste, and most important Adivasi's pathetic life, and the marginalized people of society. Once she said, "I have a firm opinion that the most precious historical materials is what is preserved in the memory of the common people." (Devi's, Maps, 77.)

This paper illustrates mainly her two works. The first is 'Draupadi' a Bengali short story. It was published in Devi's work Agnigarbha, (1978) and translated by Gaytri Chakravarti Spivak's Breast stories in (1997). Draupdi is a name of the central character in story. There are two version of her name Dopdi and Draupdi: her proper Sanskrit name is Draupdi, but she cannot pronounce her own name because she belongs to Santhal tribal community. The patriarchy society cannot accept her in the form classical Draupdi. She is on a list of wanted persons, yet her name is not on the list of appropriate names for the tribal women. Because of her Santhal tribe of Bengal, she does not consider as a part of main stream of Indian society. The social structure never accepts her as a human being, thus occupies lowest rank in a class based society. Devi divided story into four parts, in the first two parts she is fighting shoulder to shoulder with her husband for their rights as a loyal wife. But In the third section of the story we find there is a fight of a women against male oppression, and in the conclusion we see a strong character in the form of Dropdi, and she faces bravely senanayak without fear. White color is symbol of purity and innocence, and her white clothes are contrast with Dropdi's black body. Here she is not victim but equal to men who fights for her rights. Dropdi is raped repeatedly, they left her keep bleeding, the next morning, they are offer her clothes to cover her body, in real they are try to cover their deeds by clothes. After raped she is not ready to cover herself, because she has nothing to cover from this double standard society.

The second story discusses in this paper is 'Rudali',

this novel is a critique of the feudal and patriarchal system of society. Here Devi presents the hypocrisy of elite class. In whole story death has been represented as the crucial event in the life of Rudali and elite class. There is also glimpses of psychological transformation of women in her novel. Through Sanichari Devi tries to show financial and social crises of their life, but all problems cannot prevent them to move on in life.

Mahasweta Devi regards herself not a feminist, but a humanist and activist. She objects to being called a women writer, she relates herself with the problems of all people not only women. Speaking about herself, the source of her inspiration she says: "I have always believed that the real history is made by ordinary people. I constantly come across reappearance in various forms of folklore, ballads, myths and legends carried by ordinary people across generation. The reason and inspiration for my writing are those people who are exploited and used, and yet do not accept defeat. For me, the endless source of ingredients for writing is in these amazing, noble, suffering human beings. Why should I look for my raw material elsewhere, once I have started knowing them? Sometimes it seems to me that my writing is really their doing." (Devi, 77)

Concept of strong women

Firstly, we have to understand the meaning of strong women, naturally woman are soft, symbol of love and sacrifice. The male-dominated society forces her to stand against her natural characteristics, and they are enjoy their position as a daughter, mother, wife, sister etc. Emotionally God has created women much strong than men, but male tendency is not able to accept her as a strong personality. From ancient period generally women has been considered as a meek, simple, and soft creature in compare to male. She presents new kind of strong image of women. Despite of much social and political development, but the condition of women are not satisfying. Indian constitution saves women by different laws, but all women are not aware of their rights. They face brutality of man on the name of social rituals and religion. The nature of state and central government have always been very patriarchal and powerful for downtrodden and Dalit women. The lower class and

women have been kept out of the limits of power. Rich landlords and administrative bodies are trying to cheat their rights and remain them in darkness. Character of 'draupadi' is a complex and willed, who is determine to overcome the obstacles of her life. Despite all challenges, Dropdi remains silent and strong. Draupadi is a story about a women who raises her voice against the feudal system of India and ingratitude of Indian government.' Draupadi' is translated by Gayatri Chakrolacvarti spivak a feminist theorist, a literary critic. As a post-colonial writer she expressed the double standard society about women. Spivak says clearly "If you are poor, black and female you get in three ways. A subaltern women attacked by society twice, for being a woman, being a poor, and black." (Chakrovarty, p.17). Draupadi is an incarnation of 'Draupadi' of epic Mahabharata. But the Draupadi of Mahabharata was a princess of epic, and she was safe there was a lord Krishna for saving her chastity, but there is no god. Now women have to become her own God for herself. In contemporary period women are not safe at her home or workplace.

Through her writing Devi explores the shocking realities of social and politics that happen behind the curtain. Her both stories 'Draupadi' and 'Rudali' have a theme of exploitation. Draupadi who is struggling for her basic needs was "Mosnotorious female, long wanted in many"... (p.395). Devi presents a transformation in her characters in starting of novels her heroines are very oppressed, poor but at last they become symbol of power and inspiration for other women. This is the best quality of her writing. 'Draupadi' asked question in terrifying voice "What,s the use of clothes? You can strip me, but how can you clothe me again? Are you a man?" Senanayak commanded the policeman and went for dinner, and all night Draupadi was raped by policeman. Draupadi approached senanayak with her hand on her hip laughing. She turned emotionally strong though she was abused physically. She said "you asked them to make me up, don't you want to see how they made me?" (Chakrovarty,p.401).

"For the first time senanayak is afraid to stand before an unarmed target, terribly afraid"(p.402)

The second story which concerned in this paper is

'Rudali' translated by Anjum katyal, Rudali is an ironic tale of exploitation, struggle and survival. In 1992, it was adapted into a play by Usha Gagually, a leading theatre director of Calcutta. Kalpana Lajmi,s multiple award winning film Rudali is also based on the same short story by Mahasweta Devi. "Mahasweta Devi,s work, deeply rooted in history, provide vivid portrayals of the rural under class. Her many characters robust even in their suffering and, of course , in their resistance'- (Indian journal of General studies). What is Rudali? The tear sellers of Rajasthan. Rudalis are mourning women, in Rajasthan there have been traditionally hired to weep at the death of male relatives in the royal families of the state. This story also shows the double standard hypocrisy of the rich landlord, who would spent huge amount on the funeral of their near and dear. This is the source of competition among rich people to show off their wealth at funeral ceremony. Rudalis are celebrate the death of elite class, and they earn money by tears. This ritual has become the source of their income. Ironically this story presents the brutal reality of our society, there is a big lesson of life that they have to survive in darkest time of life. In the beginning of novel Sanichari's mother in-law said "Give me food" which shows the importance of money for survival. (Katyal,p.13)

Rudali is a feminist text, which shows the struggle of subaltern women to survive. Rudali is about "Bread and Mouth". The main character 'Sanichari', one born on Saturday . She belongs to low caste and consider as a unlucky women. Some lines are here from text-

"Because I was born on and named after a Saturday, that made me an unlucky daughter-in-law?! You were born on a Monday – was your life happier? Somri, Budhma Moongri, Bishri- do any of them have happier lives?(71).

This story teaches the philosophy of life, one have to sustains even in the worst period of life and face the circumstances of life. Here Dulna learns them how to deal with life, and they do better in their wailing and roling on the ground, five rupees one sikka wailing and rolling on the ground and beating one's head, five rupees two sikka.... (75). In Indian culture women are worshipped but at the same time, they face harassment,

rape, sexual abuse and other crimes against women. Devi has been described these crimes through her different literary works. Maha sweta Devi in her literary works has dealt directly with women's position in this male-dominated society, and their relationship with the administrative body. Devi has rewritten novels on the theme of tribals and womanhood with the help of iconic historical figures like Sita, Draupadi, Jashoda, and others.

Discussion

Devi's writing is a unique combination of social activism and literature. She is a dominating literary face in contemporary literature. The present study deals with Devi's effective literary works. Her both works *Draupadi* and *Rudali* are an ironic narratives of survival that revolve around life of Dalit wome, and tell about their pain and struggle. Despite of much development, yet India is not free from exploitation of women. She describes in her writing, challenges that women face and tolerate. They are force to live in a society that is dominated by male. She represents women have secondary status in patriarchal society. Gaytri chakrovarti narrates in her translated version of 'Draupadi'- "Shaming her, a tear trickles out of the corner of her eyes...She's been made up right...How many? Four-five-six-seven-then Draupadi has passed out." (Devi,1978/1981).Devi depicts, that the body of Dopdi is an object for the force, through brutality they want to make her mute, but that was big mistake. Because their brutality has become boon for her, and she turned into a powerful personality. In *Rudali* all the women characters are Sanichari and Bhikni themselves represent pain and suffering. *Rudalis* are in the pathetic condition to maintain their existence. Death is a symbol of joy, an occasion of jubilation because *Rudali* gets an opportunity to make money. Devi makes a satire on the patriarchal system of the elite class.

This paper explores the psychological expression of women in her works. In the beginning part of her novels the protagonists are seem depressed, meek and oppressed, but after sometime there is change in their expression. They take stand for themselves, and become a source of inspiration for others. This is quality of Devi's writing, which become inspiration for a better society.

This transformation of her characters explore the harsh reality of society, because Devi has intimate connection with tribals that allowed her to know grassroots-level issues. Her personal experiences show in her writing. She does not accept weak image of women that is why her each work present women inner power which covered by society on the name of caste, religion. Rape has been a deadly weapon against women, which shows in *Dopdi*, who threatens the masculine of her oppressors by refusing to be ashamed of her mutilated body. The paper critically investigates the psychologically expression of women during different phase of their life, and try to find a better social structure for women.

Methodology

In this paper, an attempt to investigates the challenges, issues of woman in selected works of Mahasweta Devi. The study is qualitative from a variety of secondary sources, including reports, books, articles and information about women in perspective of Devi. Devi's language is very simple and ironic to the complexity of the local issues of lower section and women. Through her simple writing she touches emotions of readers, and make them aware of complex realities of feudal system of India. Her translation plays a crucial role to make her a literary figure not only in Indian literature but also on international platform.

Conclusion

This paper discussed the image of women through Devi's selected works. Devi was an eminent writer in Bengali literature who had enriched depositaries of Bengali literature with her best works. Devi's text showed the patriarchal nature of society where tribal woman were raped multiple times, and they are subject of fantasy. The administrative machinery stands for rich landlords not with poor tribal woman. Devi brought two subaltern women from same background, they had same problems. Her characters are not 'silenced-subalterns' rather she creates a strong image of woman who can standup for herself, and refuses to be subjugated by sickened society. Development of family and nation is depends on woman so it is essential to create a secure and healthy atmosphere, equality of rights can ensure better democratic system.

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