

FEMINISM IN THE WORKS OF MAHASWETA DEVI

S. RAMYA¹ & G.RUBY²

¹Research Scholar, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India

²Government Arts and Science College, Komarapalayam, Tamil Nadu, India

ABSTRACT

Indian English literature has a traditional outlook and it offers many a theme with lateral thinking to the readers of English. The novelists of India have contributed to the field of literature covering the mere life style of Indians and their orthodox thoughts. Feminism means granting the same rights to women as those enjoyed by men. Feminism does not particularly talk of equality and rights of women but it is more about compassion, respect and understanding from the male counterparts. Throughout the world women are deprived of their social and economic rights. Twentieth century has witnessed a growing awareness among women regarding their desires, sexuality, self-definition, existence and destiny. Women's efforts to seek their independence and self-identity started a revolution all over the world which was termed by analysts and critics as 'Feminism'. The contemporary writers are still striving to provide liberation to the female world from the debilitating socio-cultural constraints and oppressive myths of their respective countries. In post-Independence India, where education of women had already commenced, the New Woman also had begun to emerge.

KEYWORDS: Literature, Novelists

INTRODUCTION

Feminism in our Indian English literature is frequently visualized as magnificent, which is most delicately handled under restricted circumstances. However, as time proceeds, feminism has been established in India, setting aside the patriarchal predominance to certain extent. Feminist writers in India today proudly sustain their cause of womanhood through their writings. In the contemporary scenario there are many writers who, through their writings, have been successful in projecting the existing social (gender) inequality. With regards to the novel styles, technique and trends in women's novels, there is a noteworthy movement involving the household with the public field of work.

Of all the Indian writers, Mahasweta Devi stands in a proud way in delivering her ideas as sharp as sounds in the minds of the readers. Mahasweta Devi was born in 1926 and comes from a family of Brahman writers. Both parents wrote and so did her brother as well as her Devi's son who became a celebrated author. Mahasweta Devi went on to teach at Bijoygarh College while also becoming a journalist and creative writer. She has also become well known for becoming a social activist and bringing attention to the lives of those who are not economically powerful and don't have the loudest voices.

In the novel **Rudali**, the story concerns the life of Sanichari. From the caste she was born into to being unfortunate enough to be born on unlucky Saturday, her life continues to see tragedy. Sanichari sees many of her immediate family pass away leaving her in a permanent state of insecurity. Somehow Sanichari continues to cling tightly to her dignity and this allows her to discover opportunities to allow her to support herself.

'For them, nothing has ever come easy. Just the daily struggle for a little maize gruel and salt is exhausting. Through motherhood and widowhood they are tied to the money lender. The attitude and community were the key to surviving life's hardships, such as when Sanichari says 'in this village everyone is unhappy. They understand suffering' meaning that suffering is easier to bear if everyone is going through the same thing. Another example was when a lady with a new baby in the village offered to breast feed Sanichari's infant grandson so she can go and work. Life was so hard for Sanichari but she managed to survive with the help of her community.

After being reunited with a childhood friend, both of them take up on an opportunity to become a professional mourner given to them by Dulan (a money lender who is of the more wealthy class above Sanichari and can be described as "a mover and a shaker") who suggests that Sanichari should tap into her life time of misery and her inability to cry for the deaths of her own family to aid the wealthy in her society to stage an appropriate farewell from this earthly life. As a result the pair is able to work; they are able to gain some income and a bowls of rice as well as the ability to introducing other women of less socially acceptable professions to this way of securing their financial independence. In the West the aim is to push the boundaries of the patriarchal system but in Rudali and in more patriarchal cultures generally, women have to manipulate the system to suit their agenda in the same way that Sanichari does in the story.

This story of **Romtha** is all about desire and passion for the sake of love. It is entwined with the minimal characters, the fate of living alone and the tradition and culture that is followed in north india in particular. It is about a beautiful young man condemned to death for a crime of passion towards his lover, the beautiful courtesan whom he kills but continues to mourn and yearn for. Also it is about a lonely young widow burning with unrequited desire. This love triangle set in twelfth century Bengal, moving between the royal city of Gaur and the forests and rivers of rural Bengal, centres on the fate of the Romtha, the branded criminal who awaits his own death. Ironically named Sharan refuge there is no refuge for the protagonist of this tale of passion, vengeance and the overwhelming hunger for life.

The play **Mother of 1084** is the original translation of Mahasweta Devi's Bengali play "Hajar Churashir Ma" has the best illustrations for the marginalized category. The neglected and suppressed plight of the woman is represented by Sujata Chatterjee, mother of the protagonist of the play Brati Chatterjee whose ideology i.e., commitment to the revolutionary and Communist Naxalite movement has labeled him as a rebel, and was killed ruthlessly by the police in an 'encounter'. In the play Mother of 1084 Sujata Chatterjee, a traditional apolitical upper middle class lady, an employee who awakens one early morning to the shattering news that her youngest and favourite son, Brati, is lying dead in the police morgue bearing the corpse no.1084. Her efforts to understand her son's revolutionary activism lead her to reflect on her own alienation from the complacent, hypocritical, bourgeois society against which he had rebelled.

Bedanabala

This is the story of a woman who leads an illegal life and she wants to have a normal life which every woman yearns for. Bedanabala and her mother lives in a place where woman were called as sex- workers(in modern term, it is also known as brothel. The purity in the heart is not considered as the place of dwelling and it is considered to be sin. The detail picture about the life style of women in particular gives a feministic approach and the society that implemented , The struggle to lead a common man's life is well brought out in this story.

These four works of Devi gives different picture on the layer. Underneath one can find a high starving towards the

life that too by the female protagonists of her works. Being a social activist, Mahasweta Devi is very clear in one idea – no suppression and no humiliation.

CONCLUSIONS

Thus all the four works of Mahasweta Devi has female as the main protagonist of the novels. These women character has strong will power to react and review their life. The traditional outlook is revealed in nook and corner of the novels, suppressing women to take up the wishes of their partners. Being born is to live and not to rule. The author concentrates more on the life style of North India. She brings out many incidents, through money lenders, mourners, sex workers and the cultural culprits.

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