

Issue of woman's survival in Mahasweta Devi's *Rudali*

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(Abstract)

Mahasweta Devi is widely considered as one of the significant novelists in West Bengal. She is a social activist, Journalist and Creative writer, in Bengal. She portrays the Struggle for tribal people in her Bengali fictional literary works. She has picturized skillfully the cruelty and sufferings of Indian tribal people and the untouchables in the hands of authoritarian upper-caste landlords. In every situation, registered her social concern and welfare of the tribal people's social status. She is one of the founders of Denotified and Notified Tribal Rights Action Group (DNT-RAG). She uttered a famous statement in an interview "Fight for the tribal, downtrodden, underprivileged and write creatively if and when I Find Time". Mahasweta Devi's *Rudali* is a marvelous short story fiction ever written in Bengali. It deals with the sufferings of the poor, low-caste, marginalized, and brings out cultural crisis.

Women writers adopt a special stance of their own. They tend to reflect the pains of their characters as their own experience. Mahasweta Devi strives hard to describe young Indian woman's struggle to achieve an identity as a woman. Her short fictions deals with the social and caste problems inherent in Indian society. Mahasweta Devi felt that her Indian heritage had shaped the way she viewed the world. Her advice is "treat every moment with respect".

In *Rudali* all the events and incidents are take place in Tahad village. In Tahad, both the extremely rich and poor people are living together. Due to the caste system they lived separately. In Tahad, Dushads, a majority ethnic group dominated Ganjus lower caste people. The Ganjus are exploited drastically, socially and economically in their own birth place. Though India got freedom but the Ganjus never feel that they live in an Independent country. .

Sanichari is the female protagonists in *Rudali* by Mahasweta Devi. She was born as a child to poor parents. Sanichari is a marginalized voice. First she is a women, secondly she was born as the untouchable. She lived in Tahad which outskirts village in Bengal. Two major castes play a vital role in her village. Sanichari belonged to Ganju by caste. In her childhood she encountered plenty of frustration at the hands of upper caste people. She does not have anything to eat. So Sanichari lived in desperate poverty like the other villagers. Every day, She under goes a lot of Struggle for her livelihood. Although she never gets her basic right among the people.

She was born on a Saturday which was considered as unlucky. So her entire life was full of plight. Wherever She goes she would suffer the most humiliation. Due to her destiny she was not able to get happiness anywhere as told by Parpatia her mother –in-law. Unfortunately her mother –in-law died when she was very young. Now she feels herself left alone in the world. No one accompanied her during critical moments, not even her husband. As Sanichari says of herself:

Becomes I was born on and homed after a Saturday, that made me an unlucky danger in land you were born on a Monday –was your life any happier Semi Buddha, Moonie Bistre-do any of them have happier lives? (152)

No one wept over Parpatia when she died because Parpatia's husband and his brother were put into solitary confinement on charges of stealing wheat from Ramavatar's godown. Ramavatar is a landholder and money lender of the village in Tahad. In that Crucial Situation, no one come forward to lend a helping hand to Sanichari. Now Sanichari is penniless. She wants to cremate her mother-in-law's dead body without much struggle. So Sanichari is constrained to go from house to house. Seeking arms from her neighbors arrange for her mother-in-law's cremation. At time time she do not have even a cup of grain in her louse.

Sanichari has a son named Budua. He is six year old, very attractive and Charming. One day, her husband died of Cholera. Before her husband's death, they were wishful of a lavish life in their near future. But all her dreams are Shattered at once. She borrowed twenty Rupees from Ramavatar Singh in order to arrange for her husband's funeral. Sanichari must work in Ramavatan's field for five years as a slavish labourer. He obtained her thumbprint on a paper. As .G.S. Amur rightly said:

Woman's Struggle in the context of contemporary Indian society, to find and preserve her identity as wife, mother and most important of all, as human being Shashi Deshpande's major concern as a creative, and this appears in all her important stories. (*Preface to Shashi Deshpandes The legacy and other stories* 10).

She never thought she would not cry loudly at her husband's funeral. Her outward circumstances could not allow her to weep over husband death. Every day, she goes to Ramavatar sings field to do a hard work for not only her survival but also her only son Budhua. There she gets unbearable insult and humiliation by Ramavatar sings. Dulan who is the legal advisor, a fellow villager and Mentor of Sanichari wants to help her in all the possible ways. He is also a ganju by caste. Apart from her sufferings, she takes a decision to cry for her husband, she receives some advise from Dulan that tears are considered as a precious gift for only the poor. So Dulan simply asks her not to reveal any kind of sadness in front of the villagers. Hence they are unable to understand other's feelings.

Budhua is a sanichari's son. Due to her familial burden, she gets him a labourer's job in the fields Ramavatar. Days passed. He gets married to a young women. Both are helpless. They lead a life of insatiable hunger. Even though they wish to lead a comfortable life in a big city. But his dream are never fulfilled. One day Budhua dies of tuberculosis. Due to Budhua's sudden death, Budhua's wife eloped with another village man. She leaves her only six month son Hora to Sanichari. Now Sanichani is desolate. Day by day she goes from one market place to another looking for her grandson's livelihood. In the Market place, her child hood friend named Bikhni runs a shop on her own. Sanichari knows about her destiny and so she does not cry even at this latest calamity in her life. She accepted it as a part of her destiny.

Sanichari and Bikhni have faced much struggle for survival. Dulan gives a piece of suggestion to both to become professional mourners at the funerals of the rich people in Tahad. Both have done their work without any interruption. So the rich people like landlords and moneylender start recruiting other Rudalis from the redlight area of the village as professional mourners. Now Sanichari bursts into tears, cries loudly, dashed her head against the wall and rolls on the ground become she is paid for it.

The aim of the present paper narrates how women feel that the society is a fetter to their sense of freedom. The customs and conventions in the male-dominated society are shackles. Mahasweta Davi writes artistically articulated the feelings of women and their struggle for existence in the society. However, they had to face a lot of hurdles, created not only by men but also by other women. All the women writers never fail to tells this situation in the respective works. The emergence of feminist movement in 1960s try to secure equal rights and opportunities for woman in the patriarchal society.

Works Cited

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