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JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTIC STUDIES

ISSN: 1305-578X

Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies, 17(3), 2026-2029; 2021

Impoverishment Of Women In The Works Of Mahasweta Devi

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APA Citation:

Vijayalakshmi, N.S., & Vetrisevi, R.S. (2021). Impoverishment Of Women In The Works Of Mahasweta Devi, *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 17(3), 2026-2029

Submission Date:08/10/2021

Acceptance Date:22/12/2021

Abstract

Mahasweta Devi, a well-known author and social activist, fights for the rights of women and the environment. Her career has been defined by social engagement and a deep dedication to India's tribal people. The tribal community has been subjected to unspeakable oppression by the wider population. Women's exploitation is reflected by the characters in Mahasweta devi's works. The tribal women are suffocated by the bonded labour regime. Their heinous death represents the objectification and commodification of women. Due to continuous sexual oppression, a large number of bonded labourers get sick, malnourished, and die. Tribal women are viewed as second-class citizens. The Pathetic situation is not only meant for the Lokavrittis (ordinary people), but also for the Rajavrittis (Royal people). They are in a pitiful state. Devi also discusses the detrimental effects of war. War is not for the people's benefit. It's a cold-blooded power struggle that costs innumerable lives and devastates the biosphere. In the name of modern reproductive technology, women are also targeted. Women are regarded as a potential investment. The investment in the female body, particularly reproductive technologies, is increasing and progressing. Mahasweta Devi's female companions are always sympathetic to her progressive ideals. This has been a long and arduous battle.

Keywords: *Oppression, Suppression, Objectifying, Commodifying, Reproductive Technologies.*

1. Introduction

Mahaswetadevi, an ecofeminist, is one of the few Indian authors whose works are widely translated. She is a tireless advocate for the improvement of the lives of India's poor. She has noticed that the brahminic culture's futile behaviours. For generations, the lives of India's indigenous women have been erased from the narratives of independent and pre-independent India. Illiteracy, sexual, economic, social, and political exploitation by upper caste men, as well as the brutality and abuses suffered by these women, are not documented in history's elite pages. They conceal not only the oppression of women, but also the decreased attention paid to the environment throughout history. The hardworking nature of indigenous women, as well as their mental and physical power, is rarely appreciated by society. These women, as thinking individuals, possess the fortitude to fight injustice, which is also absent from Indian narratives

The indigenous women, flora, and animals of Mahaswetadevi's writings are discussed in this chapter. Her protagonists resist and survive on their own in her works. Douloti represents the plight of bonded labourers who are subjected to economic and sexual exploitation by society's oppressed group.

Not only Douloti but also Subadhra of *AfterKurukshetra*, Rudali, Chandidasi of 'Bayen', Dulali of 'Statue' Dhoulai, Shanichari, Josmina and Chinta of *Outcast*, Jasodha, Gangor, are the women who are repressed by the male centred society. These women represent suppression. Mary Oraon of 'The Hunt', Phulmani of 'Water', Dejota of *The Book of the Hunter*, Dopdi of *Breast Stories* represent the third world feminists who are conscious of their right to lead a life of honour and strive hard to attain it. These women symbolise subsistence.

2. Harrowing state of women

In the story 'Douloti, the Bountiful' Douloti, Josmina in 'The Fairytale of Rajabasha' Douli in 'Dhoulai' and Shainchari all are representatives of bonded labourers. Parents sell their children to an unknown person for a pittance in exchange for a promise that their children will be safe. Female children, on the other hand, are turned into sexual traders by the agents. Ganori Nagesia, Douloti's father, is a bonded labourer as well as a dalit. Munabar Singh Chandela, the area's most powerful landowner, exploits her. He demonstrates his loyalty to his master by putting in long hours at work. Men are limited to hard labour under the bonded labour regime. Women do not mind putting in long hours, but they must fulfil their master's sexual desires. Women who are enslaved suffer from both body and mind.

Excessive extraction of natural resources has the potential to turn productive land into barren, squandered, and abandoned territory. Chemical fertilisers are used by men to turn productive land into barren soil. Land and a woman's body are same. They will remain prolific and productive as long as they are properly cared for. In India, there are more Doulotis. It is the tragic predicament of indigenous women across India. The plight of bound labourers, particularly women, serves as a warning to the nation. Continuous depletion of natural and human resources will result in extinction. Devi summarises the country's bleak situation, in which a growing number of bonded labourers have become whores:

Father Bom fuller's fingers were shaking. He said, The same history in the society of the Dehru Dun tribal women. They do this work in Delhi or Meerut or Paharpur. (I.M. 5)

In *Outcast Four stories*, Devi expresses the sham democracy that exists in India. She also speaks out on the tragic plight of underprivileged women who are treated as second-class citizens and objects. These women have endured unspeakable hardships both within and outside of their own communities. She reverberates gender bias treatment of women in these stories. Women from marginalised communities and slavas are exploited on a socio-political and economic level in each scenario. She depicts the slave trade, which afflicts the entire Indian nation.

Douloti, Dhoulai, Dulali, Chandidasi, Shanichari, Josmine, Chinta and Chunnikotal all these women are marginalised and downtrodden. Men oppress them. Their pains, which they all experienced during their childhood, are the reason for their repression. They struggle to make ends meet on a daily basis. They are in desperate need of their fundamental basics. They try to eat only one meal per day. With their families' permission, they become slaves. They hug the untold agony because of poverty. They never choose to be a whore or to work as bonded labourers. Their parents obtain funds from the 'Mastans' and sell them in order to settle the debt owed to the landowners. The native women are in a deplorable state. They are all tricked by their men. They are never protected by the guys who marry them. They regard them as a commodity to be exploited.

3. Power-game of patriarchy

This oppression and difficulty affect not only women from disadvantaged backgrounds, but also ladies from Rajavarata. Mahasweta analyses the battle's aftermath in *After Kurukshetra*. From the time

of The Mahabharata to the present, patriarchal society has taken advantage of, exploited, and harmed women's bodies for the sake of their appearance. The first narrative, 'The Five Women,' explores the harsh reality faced by five marginalised women. They reach the threshold of a royal residence in order to sympathise with Uttara, Abhimanyu's sad widow and the epic battle's famous warrior. A woman's widowhood is a terrible and distressing experience.

Women's societal and psychological conditions are both painful and distressing. The agony is indescribable. There is no scale that distinguishes between the anguish of the Rajavritta/'elite' and the pain of the Janavritta/other. The sensitivity agony of parting affects ordinary ladies as well. The irony of this story is that the five common widowed ladies are sent to the palace to console the rich widow Uttara, demonstrating that there is no sense inequality. i.e. suffering. The class is the border lie in this case. Uttara, a widow from the Pandava family, is about to marry in order to give birth to a royal heir to the dynasty. As a result, it is the five widows' responsibility to keep her joyful and in good spirits.

These are far-off dreams for the Rajavritta (royal women). The elites' distress is symbolised by Drawpadi's deep sigh. The power-hungry nature of men is to blame for this terrible existence. War is the source of life's suffering. It isn't a natural disaster or a catastrophe. When Arya Subhadra discovers her grief stricken daughter-in-law's life, she shouts.

Disaster? What disaster? Huh, old woman? Was this some natural calamity?
So many great kings join in a war between brothers. Some choose one
side, some cross over the other. It wasn't just brother slaughtering brother. We
know of quarrels-jealousies-rivalries too. But such a war for just a throne?
This, a holy war?! A righteous war? Just call it a war of greed (AK.3)

The conflict is not for the people's benefit. Even ordinary widows live quiet lives and find fulfilment. They quickly return to regular life by marrying their brothers-in-law, who were deprived by the Rajavrittis. The story's in-depth research reveals that marginalisation affects not only the Janavritta, or poor, but also the Rajavritta, or elite, in a different way. They are fortunate, but they are ignorant of life's complexities. Devi examines a cold-blooded power game that destroys countless human lives through the characters of Mahabharata. She weaves these events and passageways through the perspective of oppressed and dispossessed women.

By exploiting women and environment, man earns power and respect. In the long run, he profits, and it is evident that he has bit the hand that feeds him. Many people are aware that exploitative and oppressive behaviours endanger nature and women, which has an impact on the natural economy. Many individuals are speaking out against injustice and brutality against women and nature today. The bleak and tragic history of women will be explored, including mental, physical, and sexual abuse suffered at the hands of priests in residential institutions. Women's persecution at the hands of a male-dominated society is well-documented.

4. Surrogacy –new paradigm of patriarchy

The exploitation of women reaches to the level of reproduction. Women have evolved into a storefront for reproductive technologies. According to Maria Mies, who spoke at a 1985 conference in Bonn, women who opposed to "reproductive and genetic engineering" understood that the goal of the new reproductive technologies is not to help infertile individuals. They've come up with a plan to promote the new reproduction sector.

According to Maria Mies, natural resources, such as coal, steel, and iron, are stagnant or diminishing. Whereas the female body, with its reproductive power, is a new field of investment. Lori 'B' Andrews is the Rutgers Project's lone female member. In her paper on Feminist Perspectives on New Reproductive Technologies, she employs the new key phrases. Reproductive alternatives, reproductive options, reproductive choice, reproductive autonomy, and reproductive rights are the new terms.

Even reproduction is still viewed as a business in the phallogocentric society. They consider the human body to be a commodity. That is why so many Dalits are compelled to work in this field. Different moral concerns have developed when women are exploited in the name of reproductive technologies. Surrogacy is one of the new technologies that has emerged as a result of the advancements in reproductive technology. Richer people take advantage of poor women in the name of surrogacy. Poor women are forced to act as surrogates, putting their emotional and physical health at danger. It is not considered cheating if the surrogate is not compelled. They must be made aware of the implications of surrogacy. It does not fall under the umbrella of exploitation if done correctly.

As a result, women lack the authority to bear a kid of their own volition. The society suppresses and exploits her in every possible way. Female infanticide is a result of prenatal diagnostic technology. The amniocentesis procedure was created to detect genetic abnormalities in the foetus. However, it is commonly used as a sex determination test in India. Because female offspring are unwelcome in India, and dowry demands are high, contemporary technology is being utilised to reinforce patriarchal attitudes and structures. When a test reveals that the foetus is female, the foetus is terminated. This famincidal habit is expanding to the poorer classes as well as in absolute numbers. It simply costs Rs.500. It is affordable to even the poorest of folks. It's because women are terrified of confronting their families and husbands.

Almost 100% of the 51,914 abortions during 1984-85 carried out by a well-known abortion centre in Bombay were done after sex determination tests. There are now S.D clinics in almost every medium-sized town in Maharashtra.
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5. Conclusion

Women will get imperiled as a result of Amniocentosis. So patriarchy and racism aren't only morally repugnant ideals; they're also serious business. New technologies are not required, but rather new sex relations in which lust and burden are shared equally. It is past time for both men and women to realise that nature is not our adversary, that our bodies are not our adversaries, and that our mothers are not our adversaries.

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