

Resistance and Revolt in Mahasweta Devi's *Mother 1084* and *Bayen*

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Abstract

Resistance and revolt is one of the pre-dominant themes of Mahasweta Devi's oeuvre. In the modern and post modern literature, revolt, resistance and the protest became the staple diet for the authors. In Indian English writing, Mahasweta Devi stands as a towering figure that highlights and exposes the naked truth and the corrupted social system which operates as hegemony and marginalizes the downtrodden class. "The self-recognized communist" author uses his utmost creative talent to raise the voice and highlight the issues of women, backward class and downtrodden people. Her ideology of resistance is quite relevant in almost all her works mostly in the works of *Draupadi*, *Breast Giver*, *Behind the Bodice*, *The Hunt*, *The Children*, *The Salt* etc. there are other stories which also show the same theme. The present paper will highlight the theme of resistance and revolt in the major works of Mahasweta Devi.

Key words: Marginalization, Revolt, Resistance, Downtrodden and Culture.

Mahasweta Devi emerged as one of the leading and the foremost author in the post colonial era in India. She is the representative of the Indian culture in general and Bengali in particular. She wrote in Bengali in a very lucid and clear language, and got successful to attract the world wide attention of literary scholars and critics. Her novels and short stories highlight the marginalization of lower class people and especially women. Her novel *Mother 1084* translated work of *Hazar Churashi Ki Maa*, a Bengali novel is one of the ground breaking work. Raju Praghi writes about the novel:

Mahasweta Devi's *Mother of 1084* is set in the background of the Naxalite movement in West Bengal focusing on the economic and social exploitation in rural as well as urban areas...

The novel highlights the complex problems and the sufferings of a mother who one day wakes up and shows much resistance and revolts against the conditions and circumstances in which she finds herself trapped. The novel also shows the emotional and psychological break down of a mother who one day comes to know the death of her son who is in the police morgue and his corpse is 1084. The mother after experiencing the emotional crisis comes to know her sons revolutionary spirit. She slowly and steadily moves from ignorance to knowledge.

The author shows that how an Indian women after confronting the injustice and inhuman situation, and is also being marginalized, she does not dare to show her valour and courage and face every situation with the brave heart. In the beginning of the book, the women is being presented as sensitive, critical and inactive but with the passage of time she realizes her power and come into action. Her husband of Sujata always treats her with humiliation and disgust. She is being presented as subservient and submissive in the male chauvinist society where she is not able to raise her voice. The husband says:

I am the Boss in the house what I say goes. Thousands of time.”

(Bandyopadhyay 1997: 43)

The will power and the power of resistance come when she faces the death of her son. She revolts and resists against oppression which she experiences throughout her course of life. She realistically resists and revolts when the father does not recognize the dead body of his son. Even he does not bother to attend the last rites of his son, and she attacks her husband with some harshest comments: she says:

Sujata: But that soon? Even before the body has been identified? A father gets the news on the telephone and does not even think of rushing to have a look? All that he can think of is that he'd compromised, if his car went to Kantapukur.

Sujata becomes the mouthpiece of the author who focuses the readers and audience to ponder over the problems of naxalites, and it is also a harsh criticism on the role of a woman in the male dominated society. The novel creates the awareness among the readers and focuses them to think over the marginalized society in the post colonial time of India. Resistance becomes the need of the hour and should create the awareness and consciousness regarding the humanistic values.

Resistance in *Bayen*

Mahasweta Devi's another play *Bayen* is about the women's role in the traditional society. Women who is twice marginalized but the play shows that how a woman is thrice marginalized on the basis of caste, tribal and sex. The life of women here is the complex that she has to walk on the edged sword. Samik Bandyopadhyay (1986) remarks:

Bayen in which a mother is branded as a witch and separated from her son till the latter acknowledges the dead woman as his mother lies deeper than the obvious protest the inhumanity of superstition.

Structurally *Bayen* is very short and has only four scenes. The play highlights the different dimensions of social repression. The protagonist Chandidasi Gangadasi is presented as a human being rather than a woman. She is trapped into social familial duties. The author through Chandi exposes the subjugation of woman and oppression against her.

The play highlights the oppression and suppression against women in the male dominated society. The physical, mental and psychological separation of the protagonist leads her to resist and revolt against the oppressive environment. There is constant suppression and humiliation, alienation and subjugation in the patriarchal society against women. Women become the victim of male oppression and the circumstances. The play begins with a lullaby of a mother who feels isolation without her son.

Bayen : “My child god sleeps in my lap... In my lap... (stop singing) I don’t have anybody

and more nobody. When I had not become a Bayen, I had everybody.

She recalls the past time and feels isolation and alienation but feels the job of undertaking as dignified. The play offers a strong criticism on the grounds the women is being treated in the socio-political environment. The society repeatedly rejects her demands and she feels utter helplessness. The hypocrisy and double standarness of male dominated society is exposed by te author in a very clear terms.

I “tell him everything today, everything all the wrong I suffer. Just a little rice, the salt all mixed with clods, worms in the lives, why should I take it? (Ibid: 84)

Concluding Remarks:

In the works of Mahasweta Devi, there is constant oppression which needs the resistance and revolt. The resistance and the revolt became the need of the hour for every subjugated creature especially for women. The author through the an=bove discussed works try to highlight the bias nd prejudice of male dominated society and through the protest and the resistance the subjugated ones can create the mass awareness. These plays make the readers and audience sensitive and aware about the evils prevalent in the society which controlled and operated by the biased and prejudiced minds. These play attempts to bring the change through the resistance and revolt.

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