

The Problems Faced by a Tribal Woman as Seen in Mahasweta Devi's *The Hunt*

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Mahasweta Devi is one of the prominent writers and worked for the rights of the low class people, especially the tribal people. The characters of Mahasweta Devi are landless labourers, tribal people, and poor women, which are the prominent one in her writings. Mahasweta is the only one who describes the word counter, which means killing by police encounter and also description for the death of police torture, which are still happening in the society. *The Hunt* by Mahasweta Devi exposes of how the tribal people are closely living with the nature, which is providing each and everything for them, and can easily survive with forest and animals because nature is the world for them. The tribal people, who are the sons and daughters of the nature and they are still disturbed by the society. The tribal people, who feel for their actions and apologize for their ecology, because they are inseparable from nature and nature seems to be their mother.

Mahasweta Devi shares her thoughts and ideas on the tribal people through works and speaks of how they are living in the forest and how they are closely connected with the nature, because nature is the mother of them. Without nature, the people cannot survive in the world. Food of the nature is very healthy and can eradicate the diseases because food is the medicine. As the text lines will be an apt to discuss the above concept. "The Sobors will be forgiveness if they are forced to fell a tree: You are our friend. I do this because my wife doesn't have any food, my son doesn't have any food, my daughter starves. Before they killed an animal, they used to pray to the animals: the bird, the fish, the deer" (*The Hunt* ii).

But now, all the natural things are eradicating because of the modernization and urbanization and facing natural disasters. Mahasweta Devi gives more importance for the tribal people, who are the worshippers of nature, and also saviors of the nature. In *The Hunt*, she negotiates the difference between the ancient time and the modern time, which are changing from time to time due to globalization. The following lines will be an evidence to remember the above idea. "As long as the forests were there, the hunting tribes did not suffer so much, because the forests used to provide them with food, shelter, timber, hunting. But now that the forests are gone, the tribals are in dire distress" (*The Hunt* ii).

The tribal people are the bonded labourers due to the loss of land and also becoming slaves. In order to survive, they are suppressed by the land lords and could not get proper wages even for the food. So, they are forced to the critical situation of poverty by the land lords. No one is ready to help for them even from the government side also. Mahasweta Devi exactly points out the reasons for poverty and sufferings through her work. As the text lines will be exact for talking of those problems. “Nothing is done for them although so much money is allotted for them. They do not want money; they want facilities; they want to live the life of an honourable poor Indian, you might say. But they are denied everything” (*The Hunt* iii).

The Hunt written by Mahasweta Devi exposes not only the problems of tribal people but also the grief of writer because she is the crusader of the tribal people and sacrifices her life for them. Mahasweta describes that the tribal people are more civilized than others. *The Hunt* conveys that the tribal people are not against anything, but they could not live freely and facing lot of problems. So, Devi focuses her views to unite them, but not ready to accept her and ignored by the government. She speaks of her bitter experience from the government side through this work. When the people unite with others, they will share each and everything, including the food, because they all suffer together during the time of drought. The readers can know the reality of the government, which is never ready to accept the unity of the people. “In 1986, I formed the Adim Jati Aikya Parishad [Tribal Unity Forum] in desperation. The Government is angry at this, at the uniting of the tribes. I have to hammer and hammer upon this” (*The Hunt* ix).

The Hunt deliberates that how the system condemns the tribal people as criminals and face all the problems because suppression and oppression are playing vital roles in the society. Mahasweta Devi longs for individual freedom, compassion, justice, and equality. In this world, there are lots of problems happening for various reasons, but they will not punish mostly and blame the tribal people for all the problems, because they are easily victims for the crime, and can blame them that they are suffering even for the food. As the text lines deliberate the truth of writer and can know the reason for demanding the justice. “All over the world. Do these tribes commit all these crimes? They are your easy victims, they are your prey, you hunt them. The system hunts them. And wants to brand them. The system which hunts them and uses as target is the criminal” (*The Hunt* x).

Through this work, Mahasweta Devi describes the fact of the country, which is facing much more injustices by the unbalanced system. The people can say India as a non-violent country but in reality, it is wild. She foresees individual rights and freedom is the only way to avoid violence killing, murdering, firing, and kidnapping. The following text lines will be exact

to speak of those kinds of problems. “India is supposed to be a non-violent country. But in this non-violent country, how many firings, how many killings by bigots take place every year? When the system fails an individual has a right to take to violence or any other means to get justice” (*The Hunt* xii).

In *The Hunt*, Mahasweta Devi expresses that the pathetic condition of the children, who could not live with pleasure and they are starving and killing even for the food. The tribal children are not securable and suffering by the dominant society, because no one comes forward for them. They easily became slaves for the capitalist market, which mostly demands child from the tribal society. “In the capitalist market there is great demand for children, especially tribal children. You pay them little; you can starve them; you can kill them; no one will come for them” (*The Hunt* xv).

Mahasweta Devi speaks of the difference between men and women. The women could not survive due to inequality of the society, and they are suppressed by the men and also tortured for various problems. The women are easily victims for men, and also dominated by them. In *The Hunt*, Mahasweta reveals that the women could not live freely and oppressed by the men. When they go to work with men, they will not get proper wages, and tolerate the sufferings for their life and ready to work for the food. As the text lines will be clear to speak of the issues. “Money at home. Others will fell the trees, twelve annas daily for men, eight annas for women for trimming branches and carrying the pieced timber to the tracks. And a tiffin of cornmeal in the afternoon. Unbelievable! Salt and cayenne with the meal” (*The Hunt* 7).

In *Rudali*, Mahasweta Devi speaks of the same problem. When the lower caste women ready to work, they will get proper wage and also food for the works, because they are suffering by the upper caste. Due to poverty and lack of jobs, they will do any work for surviving in the society and could not overcome from all the sufferings. The upper caste provides food them, it is not for humanity but for their convincing only. So, the lower caste women accept for leading the life. Without food, they could not be alive in the society. Mahasweta Devi states:

Okay, five rupees each. Go, sit outside.
And they're to get rice as well.
They'll get wheat.
Give them rice, Huzoor.
Okay.
And feed them well-they can't mourn convincingly on the empty stomach.
(*Rudali* 92)

Through this work *The Hunt*, the readers can understand reality of the world, which gives more importance for the religion rather than human values. Mahasweta Devi narrates her keen observation on the tribal woman through the character of Mary, who is the protagonist of the work and also a tribal girl and could not live peacefully because of a woman. She faces sufferings due to patriarchal society and could not get the food easily. Ideas of the writer are practical and also reality, which are culled out through an experience of the life. The text lines will be clear to discuss of the religious problem.

Who wants a damn?
Besides, her marriage is fixed.
Where?
A Muslim's house.
Dear God! Isn't there a man in her tribe?
Her choice. (*The Hunt*10)

Mahasweta Devi distinguishes the difference between low class and upper class, which are predominant in the society and will affect even for the food. The class difference is one of the reasons for inequality. So, they could not lead the life peacefully and the low caste people will depend upon the upper caste even for the food also. Article 14 states equality before the law when the tribal people get equality, they will not lose their land and they will not be bonded labours. They need not depend upon the upper caste and can get the food without problems. In the reality, the low class people are easily victims, especially women. They are compelling to mingle with them, including for physical relationship. So, they could not prevent themselves and facing such kind of difficulties, because no one is ready to help them and will fight against the injustices. They can say that the people got the independence from the British, but in reality they are suffering for an individual freedom.

The readers can find out the fact through the writings of Mahasweta Devi. The readers can accept the above concept through the text lines. "Mary is indeed an eye-ful, but it would be stupid to provoke the tribals and create a police case on her account. If Mary was willing, there would have been no problem. Mary is unwilling. Tehsildar must accept that" (*The Hunt*11). The writer shows that how Mary will be in danger of masters if she is not willing for them and she will face false case on her account. Then Tehsildar will accept the case because he is the master of Mary.

Through this work, the readers can easily identify that there is no protection for the tribal women, who could not lead their life peacefully with the tortures of upper caste, by whom the tribal women cannot do anything against them, because they can hush up anything and

everything but the tribal women cannot do that. Finally, they are ready to tolerate even the physical tortures, because poverty is the main reason and drags them to survive in the society for the food. The text lines will be easy to identify facts of the tribal woman.

Will you?
Sure. I'll give you clothes, jewels-
Really?
Everything.

Mary took a deep breath. Then said, Not today. Today I'm unclean (*The Hunt*13).

In *The Hunt*, Mahasweta deals with the social evils, which are inevitable in the world, especially for women, who can eradicate all the problems and also can protect themselves with the help of bravery. In the end of the work, Mary finally hunts the big beast, by whom she faces lot of problems. The big beast is none other than Tehsildar, who pursues her for his desire, and she hunts him for food, because nature provides so many things like fruits, vegetables, food, wood and so on. In the forest, they can get food easily and also can live with pleasure.

The women should be aware of the society, which will blame them, and the government must come forward to fulfill their fundamental needs in the proper way because there are lot of funds allotting for them. The women should get the education first, by which they will get all the rights and will be the bright future for them. This paper aims to liberate the tribal people from all the difficulties and helps to survive in the society with presence of nature.

Works Cited

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