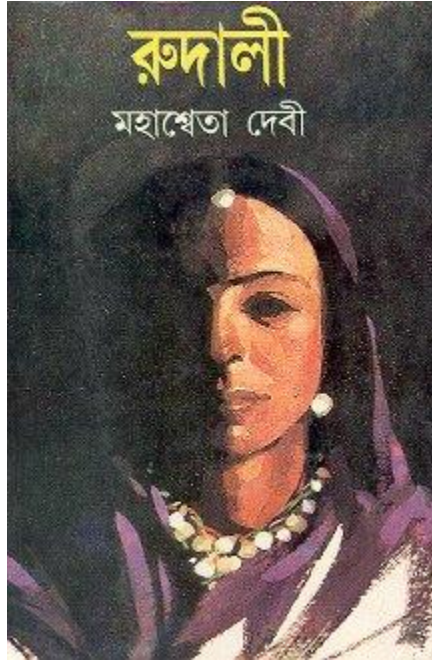


**Marginality in Mahasweta Devi's *Rudali***  
S. Pragadhipriya, M.Phil. Research Scholar



**Mahasweta Devi**

Mahasweta Devi was born in 1926 in Dhaka, in a privileged middle-class Bengali family. She is an extraordinary woman who has written and fought for the marginalized tirelessly for the past six decades. She is a culmination of an activist and a writer working for the betterment of subaltern in her own way of protesting against the atrocities on down trodden by the main stream society. Mahasweta Devi is one of the eminent voices in Bengali Literature. Her writings configure more the social problems in her geographical trope. She is a powerful writer who is more concerned with the problems of the social classes which are in the peripheries. Mahasweta amplifies the sufferings of the marginal cases castes and above all the women in these classes and castes. Her characters are the strong and realistic representatives of their respective castes and communities. Mahasweta Devi, at the beginning of the novel, places her central character Sanichari in the area of low-caste with deperate poverty. The problems of Sanichari are also the problem of her caste, class and her gender. Mahasweta Devi's major concern is the social, political, cultural and economic 'down and out' ness of a sect which is inseparable from a society.

**Pangs of the Female Protagonist**

Further, the author concentrates more on the pangs of the female protagonist who echoes the agonies of other female characters in the text, as well. In fact, Sanchari belongs to the social

marginality which remains far off from the social-cultural and economic focus. Her marginality becomes graver as she is a female and is further dominated by the males of her own caste and community. The same psychology subalternity keeps recurring in her life with the death of her brother-in-law before dawn keeps her away of wailing. Ramavatar Singh's callous nature is revealed in the very beginning of the shortstory, as he locks up all the ganjus and dhushads for a meager loss of wheat. It was a threat to the community altogether that they will be thrown out of the village. The same psychological subalternity keeps recurring in her life with the death of her brother-in-law and his wife. Sanichari is afraid of religious rituals and ceremonials to be undertaken to control her grief. Death becomes relief to Sanichari as the least their own stomachs would be full. The most disastrous thing happens after this which is the death of her own husband, her responsibility to bring up her son and the religious rituals to be offered persist her stone heart to remain calm after her husband's death. In order to appease Mohanlal, she received Rs.20 and put her thumb print on a paper stating that she would repay Rs.50 through bonded labour on his fields over the next five years, capitalist ideology of dominating the lower class people with debts is shown when Mahasweta Devi writes that Ramavatar Singh faced a lot of criticism when he wipes out the debt of Sanichari at his uncle's death. Dominant class in the society wants the subaltern to work like cattle.

### **Have and Have Not**

The author brings together `have and have not` on the same path for neglecting their responsibilities of nourishing their old relatives. Poor do not have money to spend for the medicinal treatment for their old relatives. There is a competition among the rich fellows to spend huge amount on the death ceremonies of their relatives only for the sake of gaining prestige. Mahasweta Devi sidesteps gender issues, patriarchy and more highlights on the community relations. Dulan becomes a guiding star for Sanichari in every juncture of her life steps. After Bikhni's death, Sanichari is under pressure to leave to work as Rudali, Dulan understands the gravity of situation and says to Sanichari, "Look Budhua's ma, it is wrong to give up one's land and your profession of funeral wailing is like your land you must not give it up"

### **Community for the Weaker Sections**

The writer stresses on the importance of community for the weaker section of the society, the community bondage between the poor and oppressed is strong enough for survival of the each and all of community. There are number of examples depicts in the novel by the author about how the poor and oppressed help and cooperative other poor and oppressed in their respective communities. The author portrays with examples that the marginalized men and women help and support each other, on the contrary upper caste and class people cheat betrays their relatives for gaining wealth, money, land, and prosperity. It is impossible for the marginalized people to survive in the village without the support of each other.

### *Rudali*

The text of *Rudali* highlight on the bond aging relationship between women, the relationship between Sanichari and Bikhni is off course close, sensitive, affectionate and supportive. Sanichari meets Bikhni in the market place, where she is searching her grandson is already lost every member of her family, she is free from all other ties and relations. On the other

hand Bikhni is equally abandoned by her son; leave her home with no plan about where to go. She prepares to survive by begging at some railway station if necessary. In every domain of life such as social, financial, caste, gender, age, family these women are tribally equal. Bikhni is delighted with Sanichari's house, she loves a household work, she clean the house, clothes mats and quilts, she fetch water from the river and with little effort start vegetable patch in front of Sanichari's house.

The dreams of the marginalized people are very simple, straightforward and ordinary, but these dreams are never fulfilled. The central character of the novel, Sanichari has a simple dream to live peacefully in the bosom of her family surrounded by the grand-children, she desires to buy a wooden comb for her hair, to wear bangles for a full year, neither of her dreams are materialized. The author devotes much of the text to tracing evolution into a professional team; she also insists that this is a story of survival. The major concern of the text is to establish itself, as reality and not fiction. The harsh realities of poverty, exploitation, the struggle for survival and deaths are exposed in the brutal detail by the writer in the novel. The gender issues are secondary as discourse of class in the text. Mahasweta Devi at the closing of the text comprised the marginalized and the outcaste intervening to the center of the society. The writer throughout the text represented the marginalized voices through central and the various characters. Throughout in Mahasweta Devi's varies fiction women's subjugation is portrayed as linked to the oppressions of caste and class.

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S. Pragadhipriya, M.Phil. Research Scholar  
Arignar Anna Government Arts College  
Villupuram 605602  
Tamilnadu  
India  
[priyapragiya.24@gmail.com](mailto:priyapragiya.24@gmail.com)