



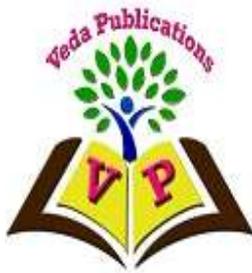
THE VOICE OF THE VOICELESS: A SOCIOLOGICAL SCRUTINY OF THE CONDITION OF TRIBAL WOMEN ACROSS TWO CONTINENTS

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ABSTRACT



The 'struggles' faced by women are portrayed in many literary works. Issues of women have also been voiced in public forums but the issues of tribal women have not been adequately represented. Tribal women face double marginalization of being a woman and also being part of an already oppressed class. The present paper thus attempts to illustrate and analyse the problems faced by the tribal women. The key question raised is - Is there really a serious issue for tribal women even after trying to secure them with new laws? The question is answered by comparing two short stories – Mahasweta Devi's *The Hunt* and Zora Neal Hurston's *Sweat* from two different continents. The texts used for analysis also project some tribal women characters who had the courage of raising their 'voices' against the existing social evils though being surrounded by the 'voiceless' masses.

Keywords: Tribes, Tribal, Adivasi, Dual-Pronged Socially Handicap, Female Genital Mutilation, Sociology, Conflict Theory, Feminist/Feminine Conflict Theory, Dysfunctions.

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INTRODUCTION

'Tribe', according to the Oxford Dictionary is defined as, "A social division in a traditional society consisting of families or communities linked by social, economic, religious or blood ties with a common culture and dialect, typically having a recognized leader". Stephen Corry (2011) also mentions 'tribal people' as those who had lived their lives for many generations that were starkly different from the mainstream society.

TRIBES OF INDIA

In India, the term used for referring to the Indian tribal people is "Adivasi". According to the 2011 census, 8.6% of India's population is made up of these *Adivasis*. The Scheduled Tribes are also referred to as the "Adivasis" which means original inhabitants. For centuries together, they were always socially and geographically isolated from the major population. The Constitution of India in Article 366 (25) defines Scheduled Tribes as "such tribes or tribal communities or part of a group within such tribes or tribal communities are as deemed under Article 342 to the Scheduled Tribes [ST's] for the purposes for this constitution". Scheduled Tribes is also referred to as "Adivasi" which means the original inhabitants of a geographical location isolated from the urban areas.

These tribes are spread throughout India and they can be divided into six divisions according to the demographic location. They are: i) North East India, ii) North India iii) East India iv) West India v) Central India vi) South India.

i) North East India

- a) Meghalaya – Garo Tribes and Hynniewtrep Tribes are inhabitants of Meghalaya.
- b) Mizoram – Tribes like Chakma, Ralte and Pawi are inhabitants of Mizoram.
- c) Manipur - Tribes such as Aimol, Anal, Angami, Chiru, Chothe, Gante, Hmar, Kabui, Kacha Naga, Koirao, Koirang, Kom, Kamgang, Mao, Maram, Maring, Lushai, Masang, Moyon, Paite, Purum, Sema, and Smite belong to Manipur.
- d) Assam – Mishing and Boolo are the tribes of Assam.

ii) North India – In North India, the tribal people are found in Jammu and Kashmir, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh.

iii) East India – They are present in West Bengal, Orissa, and Jharkhand.

iv) West India – They occupy Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Goa.

v) Central India – They are found in Madhya Pradesh and Chattisgarh.

vi) South India – They live in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Kerala.

The economy of tribal people of India are divided as Food-Gatherers and Hunters; Permanent Settled Cultivators; Pastoral People; Shifting Hill cultivators; Manual Labouring group and Craftsmen.

ISSUES FACED BY TRIBES OF INDIA

The contemporary problems faced by Indian tribes are Shifting Cultivation, Land Alienation where the tribal lands are converted into non-tribal lands, and problems related to health and nutrition because they believe in faith cure and age-old traditional methods and local herbal medicine. Specifically, the plight and problems faced by the tribal women are relatively higher when compared to tribal men. They face issues like Dual-Pronged Social Handicap (Chinu C*) discrimination.¹

TRIBES OF AFRICA

Indian Tribal people have an umbrella term "Adivasi" for identification but in Africa, the tribal population is divided on the basis of their unique language/dialect and culture which differentiates one tribal group from the other. The tribes of Africa are divided into six divisions. They are as follows:

i) Central Africa – In Republic of Congo, the tribes are Luba, Mongo, Kongo whereas in Nigeria, one can find the Kanuri tribe.

ii) Horn of Africa – In Ethiopia, Oromo, Amhara, Somali, Tigrayanus, and Afar inhabit whereas in Eritrea; Tigrayanus, Afar and Somali inhabit.

iii) North Africa – Maghrebis inhabit in Maghreb and Egyptians in Egypt.

iv) South-east Africa – Hutu tribe are inhabitants of Rwanda, Burundi tribe of Democratic Republic of Congo, and Chawa tribe are inhabitants of Malawi and Zambia.

v) Southern Africa – Zulu, Xhosa, Xitsonga, Sotho Tswana, and Kalanga tribes inhabit the places in

¹ Dual-Pronged Social Handicap: one of being a woman in patriarchal society, and another being a member of marginalized section of Indian society.



South Africa whereas the Shona, and Xitsonga tribes are prevalent in Zimbabwe and Mozambique; Kalanga tribe is also present in Zimbabwe; Lesotho Tswana tribes are common in Sotho; while Kalanga tribe is also found in Botswana.

vi) West Africa - Ethnic tribal groups are present in Rivers state of Nigeria whereas Yoruba tribe occupy Nigeria, Benin, Togo, Ghana, Ivory Coast and Sierra Leone; Igbo tribe is found in Nigeria; Hausa tribe in Nigeria, Niger, Benin, Ghana, Cameroon, Chad and Sudan; Mande Tribal people are found in The Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, Senegal Burkina Faso, Ghana, Liberia, Guinea Bissau, Niger Mauritania and Chad; Akan tribe in Ghana and Ivory Coast; Fulbe tribe in Mauritania, Gambia, Guinea, Bissau, Nigeria, Cameroon, Senegal, Mali, Burukina Faso, Benin, Niger, Chad, Sudan, CAR, Ghana, Togo and Sierra Leone.

ISSUES FACED BY THE TRIBES OF AFRICA

The tribal people of Africa face many problems related to their lifestyle, medicine and society. There are frequent fights between tribal groups for boundaries, lack of clean water, poverty, famine and diseases. Besides fighting against a disease like Malaria which is the worst kind of epidemic disease in Africa; they lack fundamental resources like food, nutrients, and water for sustainable life. These are the few common problems faced by both the genders of the tribal communities.

Taking this into contemplation and considering it as a global problem of the tribal people across the continents, the present paper attempts to focus on the problems and exploitation faced by the hapless and 'voiceless' tribal women of two continents – India (Asia) and Africa. Though the tribal women belong to two different continents yet their nature of plight has remained the same over the centuries.

PLIGHT OF TRIBAL WOMEN IN INDIA

Tribal women in India face issues like unequal payment of wages when compared to a male member of the same tribe, sexual exploitation by the contractors in the work places, and flesh trade that has drastically increased in the recent times. The Santhal tribal women of Jaunsar-Bawar tribe, Toda and Kota tribe are neither allowed to perform or attend religious ceremonies nor allowed even to

cross the temple premises. These are only a few issues faced by the tribal women of India.

PLIGHT OF TRIBAL WOMEN IN AFRICA

The tribal women of Africa are marginalized more than a typical woman face in a patriarchal society. The indigenous tribe of Himba in Northern Namibia in Africa do not allow the women of their tribe to even take bath. According to them, if the women take bath their beauty would be lost. Similarly, in some African tribal communities, tribal women face Genital Mutilation as an obligatory tradition which is painful forever for the women. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is the practice of ritualistically cutting or removal of some portions or all of the external female genitalia in Africa, Asia and Middle East. The procedure is extremely painful and most of the times fatal.

TRIBAL LITERATURE

The tribulations, torments, anguish, and ordeals of the tribal people and especially the tribal women are portrayed in literature also. There are many writers in both Indian and African literature who portray and reveal the ordeal of the tribal people and more specifically the tribal women through their writings.

INDIAN TRIBAL OR "ADIVASI" WRITERS

The few important Adivasi writers of India are Tem sua IAo, Dayamani Barla, Lako Bodra, Mahasweta Devi, Anuj Lugun, Raghunath Murmu and Haldhar Nag. They are the prominent writers who speak about and portray the issues faced by the tribes and tribal women in India.

AFRICAN TRIBAL WRITERS

The important African writers who represent and depict the problems of tribal people and women are Chinua Achebe, Zora Neale Hurston, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Ayi Kwei Armah, Mariama Ba, Nuruddin Farah, and Ngugi wa Thiong'o.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The vast and extensive literature surveys on tribal women's issues are more statistical by nature. The portrayal of tribal women's issues is mostly reflected in literature. These are few important literature surveys which represent the challenges, struggles and victimization of the tribal women in real life as well as in the field of literature.



Dalip K. Gosain (2005) conducted a study on economic empowerment of tribal Gujjar women through Dairy production. His observations were that the Tribal Gujjar women rarely come in contact with new improvised method in dairy production i.e. it is said that have very rare chance of developing contact with the outer world and with the men of their Gujjar and men of Non-Gujjar communities. The tribal women of Gujjar were only educated till primary level. He proved it through the data of socio-personal profiles of the respondents from Amb block of Una and Indora Block of Kangra District that the access and awareness to empower them were through economic stability and education.

Santhosh Kumar (2005) suggested that the ratio difference between the workspace population in country between male and female is 5:1 whereas the difference between the both these genders in the tribal population is 3:1. Tribal women of Maharashtra occupy less economic stability. Similarly, 65% of tribal women of Maharashtra mostly work as daily wage labourers. In the occupational sector, women are paid less when compared to men. According to him, 43.4 percent women are paid Rs. 20 per day whereas only 2.8 percent of men are paid Rs. 20 per day. Similarly, the mortality rate of women is very less because of early marriage and early pregnancies. 86 percent of the tribal women in urban Maharashtra are illiterate whereas in rural Maharashtra its worse - 96 percent are illiterate.

Abdul Kadir Ayinde (2014) in his research paper "Nigeria in the Colonial Era: A Historical Interpretation in Akachi Ezeigbo's novel *The Last of the Strong Ones*" tries to explore the historical perspective in the novel where women play an active participation in the socio-economic, cultural and political emancipation of the nation in a patriarchal society.

Pujasree Chatterjee (2014) discusses the various challenges, status and role of tribal women in socio-economic ladder and also suggests some strategies to elevate the level/status of tribal women in all fields. She says that even though there are few tribes like Garo and Khasi which give high status to women in socio-economic ladder; majority of the other tribes are predominantly patriarchal in family structures. She also discusses about the unequal pay

wage in workplace; though the tribal women are more hardworking and sometimes though they are the only source of income they are paid less in comparison with the other men and tribal men. The literacy level among the tribal women is very low when compared to scheduled caste women and non-scheduled caste women.

Ajay Kumar (2017) reports in his article that tribal women are raped, assaulted, victimized in Chattisgarh. They suffer silently and no one is ready to speak for them as representatives.

Pooja Shankar (2017) in her article states that sexual assault, gang-rapes and physical assaults are carried over against the tribal women of Pegdapalli, Chinnagelur, Peddagelur, Gundarm, Burgicheru and in Bijaipur district of Chattisgarh by security forces. The volunteers who try to voice out for tribals are cross fired and intimidated by false cases and arrest. She also states that "Rape has become a weapon against the tribal women".

Swati Parashar (2017) states that though UN has declared International Day of World's Indigenous People on 9th August still tribal or Adivasi women in India undergo brutal deaths, lynching, abuse and violence and are branded as witches. In states like Bihar, Jharkhand, Chattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, and Rajasthan in the west to Assam in the east; majority of the tribal women are brutalized and raped in the name of witch-hunting, practicing witchcrafts and possessing occult powers. For instance, PhoolKumari Devi's body was found on a railway track in Bhagalpur in a mutilated condition on 7th August 2017. It was found that she was kidnapped from her house by some goons armed with weapons who accused her for practicing witch-craft and it was also found later that she was raped and then murdered.

In Arun Joshi's novel *The Strange case of Billy Biswas* (2008), the tribal woman Bilasia whom Billy marries because of his obsession towards her and his friend Romi also shares the same perspective towards her as "she had that untamed beauty that comes to flower only in our primitive tribe" (140-141). The men in general be it tribal women or civilized women see them as an object of beauty, 'exotic' rather than considering them as a co-human first. The popular perspective of tribal women as



beautiful and sensuous is affirmed by both the characters i.e. Romi and Billy.

Madhumita Ray (2016) in her research article titled "Patriarchy, Violence and Women – A Study of Conflict against Women in Kandhamal, Odisha" comments that raping of women by the majority or more powerful group has been a symbolic exercise of showing supremacy and power.

UNICEF states that nearly 47% of tribal women undergo chronic energy deficiency and 68% tribal women are anaemic. It also reports that anaemic tribal women are under nourished mothers who give birth to under nourished babies.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The present paper attempts to find out the plight and struggle of tribal women as they are Dual-Pronged Socially Handicap. For the sake of analysis, two primary texts – short stories - from two different continents i.e. India (Asia) and Africa are taken for comparison to uncover the struggles of the tribal women and project how they fight and emerge out of their problems.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research queries are as follows:

- Are Tribal women subjugated and exploited because they belong to the tribal community?
- Are the status, struggles and problems of tribal women universally the same?
- If they have been subjugated, exploited and beleaguered by the men, what are the measures they prefer to oppose and arise from their struggles?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework incorporated to analyse the primary texts is through sociological perspective and by employing the sociological theory to find a solution/elucidation for the research questions stated above by the researchers.

SOCIOLOGY

Sociology is demarcated by T. Abel as "Sociology is the scientific study of social relationship their variety, their forms, whatever affects them and whatever they affect" (ATOS 06).

The term sociology was coined by August Comte, a French Philosopher and Sociologist in 1839. He has been called as "Father of Sociology". In his

work "Cows de Philosophic" [Positive Philosophy] he has clearly stated that there is a need for the creation of a distinct science for society. He first called this form of social study as "Social Physics" and later as "Sociology". Comte pointed out that 'Sociology should concern itself with an analysis and explanation of social phenomena'.

Sociology, though it has developed as an individual field of study, when we see a historic sketch of the development of this field of study, we see that in different ages, individuals from different fields of sciences have contributed for its development as a separate discipline of study.

The earliest attempts of sociological study were initiated by the Greek philosophers Plato and his disciple Aristotle. Plato's "Republic" and "Aristotle's "Ethics" and "Politics" are the first primary texts in the field of Sociology. Romans contributed in this field through Cicero with his great work "De Officis" [On Justice] while in modern era contributions were made by Hobbes and Machiavelli, Sir Thomas More, Thomas Campanella, Sir Francis Bacon, and James Harrington.

Sociology in India started to bloom from 1919 in the University of Bombay. But in 1930 its study was developed as a separate discipline. Some prominent Indian sociologist writers like G.S. Ghurye, R.K. Mukherjee, and H.T. Mazumdar made original contributions to this field of study.

CONFLICT THEORY

Conflict Theory gives importance to the outlook in sociology that accentuates the social, political or material inequality of a social group. It is also used to analyse issues like war, wealth and poverty, the haves and have not's, rebellions, dogmatic strives, exploitation, discrimination and prejudice, violence, rape, child abuse, and slavery that relate to social phenomenal conflicts. It also highlights the power differentials conflict between different classes and also contrasts the highly historically dominant ideologies that are prevalent in society/traditions.

Conflict Theory is "used to explain diverse human behaviour, such as educational practices that either sustain or challenge the *status quo*, cultural customs regarding the elderly, and criminal behaviour" (ST 11). This theory is widely correlated



with Marxism but it is also linked with other angles like Critical Theory, Feminist Theory, Post Modern Theory, Post-Structural Theory, Post-Colonial Theory, Queer Theory and World System Theory.

CHRONOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF CONFLICT THEORY

The roots of the Conflict Theory can be traced back to Han Fei Tzu [280-233 BC] and other Chinese philosophers. They proposed that men are innately weak and lazy and inferred that men can be kept in control only through fear of punishment. Those who have the power to punish can control the society, as the fear of the power of punishment will keep man in restraint of causing damage to society.

Polybius, a Greek philosopher [205-725 BC] focused his studies on Roman Republic. He believed that people are like animals in herds or communities because of their weakness. The bravest and the strongest person becomes the leader of the herd or community.

Conflict Theory was later formalised as Sociological Theory in the 19th and 20th centuries. Other sociologists who contributed for the evolution of the theory are Max Gluckman, John Rex, Lewis A. Coser, Ralf Dahrendorf, Ludwig Gumplovitz, Vilfredo Pareto and Georg Simmel.

Karl Heinrich Marx [1818-1883] was a German philosopher, sociologist, historian, political economist, political theorist and revolutionary socialist who established Marxism. His notable works are "The Communist Manifesto" [1848] and "Capital" [1867-1894]. He has also co-authored a text with his friend German Revolutionary Socialist Friedrich Engels.

Max Weber [1864-1920] proposed that power, prestige and property also aid to social conflicts and that such conflicts were found in all aspects of society (e.g. politics, gender and religion).

Wright Mills [1916-1962] concluded that one of the causes for the conflict between individuals is the competing interest and that resource is responsible for the creation of a social structure.

FEMINIST/FEMININE CONFLICT THEORY

One of the perspectives among the Conflict Theory is Feminist/Feminine Conflict Theory. It is defined as "The advocacy of social equality for women and men, in opposition to patriarchy and

sexism" (ST 21). It also tries to portray how from historical times women are being oppressed and struggle to gain equal access to power and resource from men in society.

Conflict Theorists and Functionalists agree that things break down in society and that unfair treatment of others is common. These breakdowns are called Dysfunctions which are breakdowns or disruptions in society and its parts that threaten social stability.

This research paper analyses the primary literary texts in Feminine/Feminist Conflict Theory to show how historically the women are oppressed in two different continents under the patriarchal society.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted for analysis of the two primary texts is descriptive and comparative analysis of two short stories – *The Hunt* by Mahasweta Devi and *Sweat* by Zora Neale Hurston.

THE HUNT BY MAHASWETA DEVI

BACKGROUND

The Hunt (Shikar) by Mahasweta Devi is one among the short-story collection called *Imaginary Maps*. This is a tale about Mary Oraon who is the daughter of Bhikni Oraon and son of Mr. Dixon. Mary is a hybrid of Oraon tribe of India and Australian blood by the Dixon son. Mary and her mother work in Prasadji bungalow. She is engaged to Jalim, the leader of the marketers and a sharp lad. She is stalked by Tehsildar Singh who comes to her village to Prasadji bungalow to take away the Sal wood logging. He grows lustful towards her but she resists his sexual advances. In an act of self-preservation later on, she turns the predator and murders him on the day of Spring Festival. The author has dedicated this short-story collection "For all the indigenous People of the World".

THE HUNTRESS OF THE HARASSER

Mary Oraon is a representative of the tribal women who rebel and revolt against injustice, brutal abuse, and harassment against them. Mary Oraon is a woman of strong physical skills and very intelligent. She guards herself with her formidable words and Machete. Her bravery is portrayed as "everyone is afraid of Mary" (IM, 4). When Mrs. Prasadji tries to mock at her marriage with Jalim, Mary slaps her with



her sarcastic comment "Why not? The Muslim says he'll marry. Your brother wanted only to keep me. The mistress swallows the slap and says nothing. You have to take words from a girl who works like animal..." (IM, 4). This incident shows her bravery and intelligence of using words as weapon when weapons can't be used.

Similarly, when Tehsildar Singh continuously stalks her she first uses the weapon of words to guard her from his sexual advances. Tehsildar Singh says to Mary "you look like Hema Malini." (IM, 9) She replies "you look like a monkey. Brokers like you, with tight pants and dark glasses, are ten a rupee on the streets of Tohri, and to them I show this Machete. Go ask if you don't believe me. Tehsildar found her way of speaking most beguiling." (IM, 9) When Tehsildar Singh's friend, Banwari, asks why she insulted his friend, Mary replies "This time I let him go with words. If he comes to fuck with me again I'll cut off his nose." (IM, 9).

Tehsildar Singh because of his lust for Mary Oraon again advances towards her when she is on her way back from the market. Tehsildar Singh catches her hand and tries to molest her. She realizes that 'words' have failed to guard her from him. So, she acts as if she has accepted his seduction but asks him to wait till the Spring Festival. He also agrees to it and leaves her. This incident shows her presence of mind to tackle a situation.

On the day of the Spring Festival, all the women go for hunting up in Kuruda Hill. Mary Oraon thinks that "Like all games the hunt game has its rules. Why kill headge hogs or hares or partridges? You get the big beast with bait.Today a small thing cannot please her. She wants to hunt the big beast! A man, Tehsildar" (IM, 15). She meets the Tehsildar Singh near the rock and asks him to come inside the ravine behind the creepers and makes him drunk and tries to seduce him. "Yes, becomes an animal. – Now take me? Mary laughed and held him, laid him on the ground. Tehsildar is laughing, Mary lifts the Machete, lowers it, lifts, lowers." (IM, 16). She has killed the biggest of the beast on the day of Spring Festival where natural law of justice is done. She then joins the feast with ladies back in the tribe normally.

Though Mary Oraon is a tribal woman she rebels, retaliates and revolts against beastly people like Tehsildar Singh who tries to oppress and exploit the tribal women for their needs and benefits without consciousness.

SWEAT BY ZORA NEALE HURSTON

BACKGROUND

Delia Jones, a washer-woman in Florida is married to Skyes. She washes the clothes of white folks and earns money for the family but Skyes takes away the money from her and spends lavishly on Bertha. And he abuses Delia Jones and harasses her brutally everyday through physical and verbal abuse. One day he brings a rattle snake to home and tells Delia Jones it will be there hereafter. Delia asks him to take it away from home. But he doesn't listen to her terrified pleas. Delia finally tells Skyes that their marriage is over; Skyes in shock leaves the house. The rattle snake moves to the pile of clothes of Delia. When she sees it, she runs to the barn and stays there. Skyes comes back in search of matches in the kitchen, the snake strikes and fatally bites him. Skyes calls Delia for help. Delia sees everything from the window outside; she waits patiently beneath the Chinaberry tree while Skye is rewarded with death for his sins.

SWEATS BEING REWARDED

Delia Jones, a washer-woman, resides in Florida. She is married to Skyes for fifteen years. The marital relationship between them is bitter and Skyes cheats her. He abuses her and calls her a "nigger Woman" (S, 1). Delia's patience gives away and she accuses him that after marrying him she has only to work hard and cries over her marriage. She says "Look ah eah, Skyes, you done gone too fur. Ah been married to you fur fifteen years, and Ah been takin' in washin' for fifteen years. Sweat, sweat, sweat! Work and sweat, cry and sweat, pray and sweat!" (S, 2). Every time he assaults her physically by beating her but this time her defensive pose of taking an iron skillet from stove stopped him from doing it. He was taken aback, "it cowed him and he did not strike her as he usually did" (S, 2).

Delia's melancholic soliloquy of her past tells that she has had a bitter experience with Skyes after the marriage. She thinks "her tears, her swear, her blood. She had brought love to the union and he had



brought a longing after the flesh. Two months after wedding, he had given her the first brutal beating. She had the memory of his numerous trips to Orlando with all of his wages when he had returned to her penniless, even before the first year had passed" (S, 2-3). This financial loss of his compelled her to choose the profession of a washer-woman because of which she lost her youth and soft beauty that turned her body into knotty, muscled limbs and harsh knuckled hands and stout woman.

She waits for spiritual help and punishment for Skyes for treating her badly and cheating her by having relationship with Bertha for the last three months and spending her hard-earned money upon Bertha's stay in Della Lewis room and for taking her to Winter Park to "Stomps". She says, "Skyes, like everybody else is gointer reap his sowing" (S, 3).

Skyes brings a rattle snake and keeps it in the house which makes Delia angry because Skyes knows she is afraid of it. After many pleadings to take it away from home, Skyes doesn't give her an ear. She shouts at him that she hates him and asks him to leave the house as the marriage is over between them. She says "Ah don't wantuh see yuh 'roun' me atall. Lay 'round' widdat 'oman all yuh wants tuh, but gwan 'way fum me an' mah house. Ah hates lak uh suck-egg dog." (S, 7). Skyes leaves the house in anger which makes her think that her fifteen years of misery and suppression is gone.

Delia when searching for matches behind the stoves came near the lid of basket for collecting clothes, she sprang back to the door out of horror and terror. The rattle snake was in the basket. She went out running into the barn and was waiting under the Chinaberry Tree. Skyes comes, ponders on the kitchen for match, the rattle snake in the stove gives him a fatal strike. Delia hears his cries for help. "Delia, is dat you Ah heah?" (S, 8). When she reached the door, he crept for two inches towards her. She came back to the Chinaberry tree and waited for Skyes to reap his sowing. "She could scarcely reach the Chinaberry tree, where she waited in the growing heat while inside she knew the cold river was creeping up and up to extinguish that eye which must know by now that she knew" (S, 9).

Here Delia doesn't act or take revenge or plot against Skyes. Skyes is repaid for his cheating,

abuses and brutal behaviour towards Delia. He is repaid with fatal death by the very snake he brought to torment Delia.

POLARITIES BETWEEN THE CHARACTERS - MARY ORAN AND DELIA JONES

Every woman faces some or the other kind of abuse in everyday life due to the patriarchal society that prevails. The way she handles it differs and makes her stand out of the crowd. Similar is the distinction between the characters Mary Oran and Delia Jones. We see Mary Oran in *The Hunt* by Mahasweta Devi portrayed as brave and shrewd by nature when compared to Delia Jones in *Sweat* by Zora Neale Hurston.

Mary Oran though not much educated uses words and her machete to safe guard herself from her abusers. She even talks about the wage differences between men and women "twelve annas daily for men, eight annas for women for trimming branches and carrying the pieced timber to the trucks" (IM, 7). She also warns the Tehsildar's advancement towards her to Banwari, son of Prasadji master. Mary Oran says, "This time I let him go with words. If he comes to fuck with me again I'll cut off his nose" (IM, 9). This shows the courage of Mary Oran who retards even her master's son, using words as a shield.

Whereas when we see the character of Delia Jones in *Sweat* by Zora Neale Hurston; she talks and pleads to Skyes not to torture and abuse her physically and verbally. But he shows his dominance over her and she replies, "You aint got no business doing it. Gawd knows it's a sin. Some day Ah'm goin' tuh drop dead from some of yo' foolishness. 'Nother thing, where you been widmah rig? Ah feeds dat pony. Heaintfuh you to be drivin' wid no bull whip" (S, 1). This shows her strong belief in God and she warns Skyes that because of this kind of behaviour he will face consequence like death. She tolerates the verbal abuses of racial discrimination Skyes makes, "nigger woman" (S, 1) and even the physical abuse of beating her when she refuses to give him money for spending on Bertha, his mistress. She patiently prays to God and waits for Him to repay Skyes with accidental death for the sins he perpetrated.

These two characters are polarities in which Mary Oran is active, brave and shrewd by nature



whereas Delia Jones is passive, tolerant, patient and innocent by nature. They are poles apart by nature but they face the same kind of abuse in a patriarchal society though in two different continents.

DYSFUNCTIONS

Dysfunctions are abnormalities in the equal, fair, moral, and ethical values in society which results in disorder and commotion in the society. These disorders and commotions threaten the well-being of the society as a whole and the lives of individuals.

In the present paper, the primary texts that are taken for analysis have dysfunctions on the basis of inequality of gender. The characters like Delia Jones and Mary Oran are either exploited or are tried to be exploited by the opposite gender of their own community or by other community males.

In *The Hunt* by Mahasweta Devi, we see characters like Ratan Singh who tried to kidnap Mary Oran from the Tohri market; Mrs. Prasadji's brother who wanted to keep her as his mistress; Banwari, son of Prasadji who complained to his father that Mary has insulted his friend in the market even though he knows that his friend, Tehsildar Singh is lustful; and Tehsildar Singh who tries to exploit her sexually and is killed by her on the day of Spring Festival called "Jani Parab" (IM, 11). The social breakdown or disorder is restored to order by Mary Oran's act of killing Tehsildar Singh who tries to abuse her sexually.

Similarly, in *Sweat* by Zora Neale Hurston, Delia Jones is harassed by her own racially discriminating husband Skyes both physically and verbally. Skyes exploits her by snatching away her hard-earned money to spend on his mistress Bertha and for drinking. He also abuses her verbally by calling her a "nigger woman" (S, 1); assaults her physically by beating her with the whip he uses to ride his cart; and finally tries to kill her with a rattle snake that he brings home but by Divine Providence he faces death by the very snake he brings to kill her.

Hence the social breakdown in moral and ethical means is restored to justice by the individual people or God Himself to reinstate the morality in society and uproot the cause that threatens the social and individual well-being.

CONCLUSION

Mary Oraon and Delia Jones are oppressed, abused, ill-treated, and harassed because they belong to the tribal community and they are Dual-Pronged Social Handicap of being a woman and more so being a tribal woman. The path each chooses to fight and emerge out of her struggle varies. We see Mary Oraon uses violence to emerge out of her struggle as a survivor whereas, Delia Jones a meek and docile person silently bears all the abuses and harassments of her husband for fifteen years, but still when her patience gives away, she allows Skyes her husband to repay the debts of her suffering through his own trap of snake-bite silently. Thus the analysis of the paper shows that be it in two different continents of the world, the plight of the voiceless tribal women remains the same everywhere and they are harassed till they take serious steps or voice against their struggles. The quandary of women and tribal women is because of the silence they maintain while they are being tormented and this is the root cause of the serious struggles that women have been forced to undergo. Francis X. Clines (1983) in his article "Poet of the Bogs" mentions about Seamus Heaney who starts his poetry note with the warning of Gaton Bachelard, the late French Philosopher, who precisely states that,

What is the source of our first suffering? It lies in the fact that we hesitated to speak....it was born in the moments when we accumulated silent things within us. (NYT 13)

It is important to 'voice' out the problems of the tribal people especially the tribal women who have meek 'voice' to be represented and sometimes their difficulty becomes 'voiceless' due to their silence.

ABBREVIATIONS USED

UNICEF: United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund.

ST: Sociological Theory.

ATOS: A Textbook of Objective Sociology.

IM: Imaginary Maps.

S: Sweat.

NYT: New York Times.



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