

**Social Transformation through Feminist Writing**

**Myth – A Narrative Space Through New propelled Expressions**

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The very title of the Seminar – Social Transformation through Literature is paving way for our new interpretation to the innate role of Literature. In this world of technology buff what best can the literature play its role as a Social Transformer is a huge question or in simple words do we consider literature as a source of social Transformation? There are times in the history of the world which records that the expression was too menace due to various reasons. Again in Indian history of Literature we have abundant examples from yester centuries that the expressions were strong Harbinger to mould the societal thoughts towards democratic discourses -visualizing society for equality. The women vacahanakaras of Kannada language or women singers of bhakti cult created a revolution in calling their God of identity as their husband in the age where the taboo was laid on such bold declarative expressions! The present writings are brimming with our interpretations like colonial, post-colonial, neocolonial, modern, cosmopolitan, etc... However, the influence of mythological characters and incidents always remain a great influence to interpret life and ideologies in literature. The mythological characters are used as metaphors to probe into varied facets of conflicts of life. The life situations remain the same whereas the rationality that has embedded through time to raise questions regarding perversity of the societal or hegemonic practices. Contemporariness prevails in all genre of expressions be it in any form of art or literature in particular. In this paper I will be discussing two stories of Mahasweta Devi (Bengali) and Paramita Satpathy (Odia).

The responsibility of society is shouldered by writers to certain extent. The prominent feminist writer Mahasweta Devi was known for her untiring concern towards socially marginalized people, and an activist who thrived to bring justice to the tribals. Mahasweta Devi in an interview says “I think a creative writer should have a social conscience. I have duty towards society... I ask myself this question a thousand times: have I done what I could have done?” (Imaginary Maps. 1995. Mahasweta Devi’s interview with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak ). This question stands as a testimony of Mahasweta Devi’s responsibility as a writer. She intended to engage all her potentiality in making the literature a strong media to uplift the underprivileged and to instigate a new thought to the existing social structure. The untoward incident of disrobing Draupadi from Mahabharata is dealt in her story Draupadi (Translated from Bengali by Gayatri Spivak). The Naxal movement and revolutions of Tribals against Government is the pivotal platform to the story. In the story, Dopdi (a coincidence in her name) along with her husband would murder rich men and seize their wells. She is once arrested by an officer and orders other army officers to rape her. The stripping of her clothes becomes here a metaphor. The act of stripping clothes by men is the denial for Dopdi to shed down the importance of a mere body which men had enforced the notion of respect. The army officers expect her to put on her clothes. But, they were stupefied to see Dopdi walking nude towards them with wounds and blood stain on her body. The narration of the incident by Mahasweta Devi depicts the threat of the army officers to see Dopdi in such an unexpected manner. Perhaps, they would have thought that they could wound Dopdi’s self-respect by sexual assault. But, for Dopdi it was just a body that was used. She illustrates the act to be beyond the existence of body which was decided way back in centuries by the patriarchal system. When she is asked to put on clothes she challenges them, “There isn’t a man here that I should be ashamed”. Much against the original character of Draupadi of Mahabharata, calling Krishna to protect her, Dopdi is not relying on anybody’s help. Alone she turns to be a protagonist in questioning the men of power. There is no game of dice here to defeat the husband. The situation could have weakened Dopdi’s husband if she would not have faced the situation in this unexpected

way. Delving in the pathetic position Dopdi, a tribal woman, the situation demanded a different approach much against Draupadi, the Princess or the queen of Pandavas.

The influence of the social and political exploitation have led the people to rebel in many ways. At the tenure when Mahasweta Devi was into writing we should not forget her direct association with many tribal communities. She voiced their problems, represented their issues and thrived hard towards it through her plays, novels and short stories. Literature, to Mahasweta Devi was not a mere expression but a force towards the betterment of community.

In Paramita Satpathy's story 'Tara' (Translated from Odia by Gopu Nayak) has an urban setting. It is night and Tara is running frantically in the forest. All her dreams which were concealed with pride started burning, disappearing and disintegrating. Surrounded by the thick forest she sits in the mid of the road and tears roll down profusely. When she sat straight she observed a light and proceed towards it with curiosity and when she goes close to the image and inquires who she is, the woman replies that she is Tara. When Tara claims that it is her name, the woman answers, "Many women have had the same name" Tara" in this world since its inception". And further adds that 'Tara' is not only a name – it is a realization, an understanding, an Awareness, a concept!' Woman is perceived beyond her physical existence because what matters the authenticity is her experience. So this woman in the forest is 'Tara' of Tetrayug, wife of Bali. Tara now out of frenzied situation recollects the reason for her flight. Sudhir, whom she loved most, had taken her to the manager Dhruv Arora to use Tara as a means to get promotion. He walks away without informing when they were seated in private room and he had mixed alcohol in Tara's glass of juice. Realizing Dhruv's move Tara recovers from intoxication and runs aimlessly into the forest. The most interesting aspect is the meeting Tara of Tetrayug! And she too has a story of her own to narrate. Tara is acquired by Sugreeva after the death of Bali, his brother and husband of Tara. And in turn Angad, son of Tara is consecrated as crown prince. Laxman comes in search of Sugreev pulling the strings of bow. Sugreev afraid to face Laxman, forces Tara to appease him. But Laxman lowers his gaze. Tara realizes that the situation had forced her to be that due her son's security.

Listening to the narration of Tara( Bali's wife) Tara rushes back to the hotel, she wiped the stains of her tears, arranged her golden pleats of her saree and went to Dhruv's room. Dhruv was stupefied. But, Tara uses the circumstance to a different direction. Nearing Dhruv, "I want Sudhir should never get any promotion in his whole career. Never ever"

Just as Dopdi's body which was abused by the officers turn out to be a threat as walks to them nude. The same body is used in by Tara to avenge Sudhir. Dopdi /Tara are not just representatives of modern women but, they stand as testimony to the hegemonic notions that are deeply rooted in the establishment of the society. Here, the body of woman is politically objectified by the system. It is socially accepted status of woman by patriarchal location. The incidents from mythology attains a strong and prominent voice to express one's views, prioritizing womanhood against a mere body. Transformation can be sensed only through discourses that occur in creative writing. And women writers have attained all the issues of women from puranic / Mythological time to the present in providing her an identity. We now are in the most tricky and sensitive structure of socio and cultural furor. None can deny the impact of technology in the process of social transformation to some extent. Yet one cannot refute the role of Mythology in the ambit of literature.