



# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

## Women as commodity in Mahasweta Devi's '*Douloti the Bountiful*'

MADHURI MALADKAR  
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH  
GOVERNMENT FIRST GRADE COLLEGE  
BIRUR- 577116  
CHIKKAMAGALUR DISTRICT  
KARNATAKA STATE

### Abstract

*Mahasweta Devi is a Bengali writer, who devoted her life to fight against the injustice and inequality of the poor and tribal people, She got various awards. She has written more than one hundred novels and short stories in Bengali which are translated into English.*

*Mahasweta Devi in her works draws our attention towards the life of tribal people, Dalit and Marginalized citizens with a focus on women. In Douloti - Mahasweta Devi focuses on how the capitalist have used Adivasi women bodies to make money. They are sold from one person to another like commodity.*

*Mahasweta Devi compares the body of women to land. where the land lord ploughs and ploughs the land to make profit. The bonded slavery system is everywhere in India they are called by different name in different states, but the system is slavery.*

Mahasweta Devi is a Bengali writer, journalist social activist tribal writer and humanist. She devoted her life to fight against the injustice and inequality of the poor and tribal people. She was honoured with various literary awards such as the Sahitya Akademi Award (in Bengali), Jnanpith Award, Ramon Magsaysay Award along with Padma Shri and Padma Vibhushan. She wrote more than hundred novels and short stories in Bengali and translated into English. Important works are *Hajar Churashir Maa (mother of 1084)*, *Rudaali*, *Sunghursh*, *Aranyer Adhikar*, *Douloti the Bountiful*, *The Hunt Pterdacty*, *Puran Sahay* and *Pirtha*, *After Kurukshetra* and *Aginigarbha* etc.,

Mahasweta Devi in her works draws our attention towards the life of tribal people, Dalit and Marginalized citizens with a focus on women. They are exploited by the rich rajaputs, politicians and land lords. Women are doubly exploited as bonded slaves and also as prostitutes. This is one of the social evils, where the innocent, poor, self-sufficient, uneducated, cultured and traditional tribal people are exploited by the rich, educated, greedy, selfish and civilized men. Tribal people live among the hilly and forest areas where this greedy men enter and spoil the life of these tribal for their selfishness. Tribal people forced to take loan and are made unable to repay it due to compound interest and forcefully converted into bonded slaves.

***The untouchables' back will be broken. They will no longer say to the master, 'You terrorize us.' They will bear everything in silence. The strong oppresses, the weak suffers, this after all is the rule.***

***Nagesia-Parhaia-Oraon, Munda, Bhuy-ian-Dusad-Ganju-Dhobi-Chamar by birth are all people who are enslaved by their burning hunger at very low wages, for very little grain, by the so-called upper castes.***

If father is a slave he has to give his teenage daughter to the land lord as his loan. Like this the husband or father can pay back the borrowed money from the money lender. These women are taken to brothels in big cities to earn money.

In Douloti - Mahasweta Devi focuses on how the capitalist have used Adivasi women bodies to make money. They are sold from one person to another like commodity. They are not given money, health care, proper food, or shelter and medicine. By these Kamiya women the boss makes lot of profit, no clothing, no cosmetics, no medicine. They have to borrow for everything and the boss adds all the loans to the first loan. No whore can repay that debt in her life time. When the working years are over they kick them out they have to beg to interest. Devi picturises, these gender violations among the Adivasi women has made them to struggle daily for their livelihood, family and children. In this corrupt greedy and thirsty society the life of tribal's particularly Adivasi women is critical.

Douloti is a 14 year old girl, who is sold by her father cruck Nagesia to Paramananda Mishir. He in turn takes Douloti to a woman Rampiyari and sells there. That woman hands her over to contractor Latia like this a woman is sold from one person to another like merchandise commodity to make profit.

Douloti has to sleep with thirty clients a day. Nobody cares for the suffering of female body. It is not just her father or husband responsible for this, but whole system of government officers- landlords- contractor- law makers and policemen

Mahasweta Devi compares the body of women to land. where the land lord ploughs and ploughs the land makes profit like that the body of women is tilled and ploughed to the maximum and raped and raped by men and till it is ravaged and dried up.

This idea is very appealing brought out in one of the prostitutes' oral song.

***These are all Paamananda's kamiyas.***

***Douloti and Reoti and Somni***

***Field work, digging soil, cutting wells is work***

***This one doesn't do it, that one doesn't do it, the other one doesn't do it-***

***The boss has turned them into land***

***The boss ploughs and ploughs their land and raises the crop***

***They are all Paramanands's kamiya.***

The bonded slavery system is everywhere in India they are called by different name in different states. In Andhra the people of Matangi, Jaggali, Malajangam, Mahar and other castes become Gothi. In Bihar Chamar, Nagesia, Parhaiya, Dusad become Kamiya or Seokiya. In Gujarat the Chalwaris, Naliyas, Thoris and others become Halpati, In Karnataka the low of birth become Jeetho, in Madhya Pradesh Haroyaha. In Orissa Gothi and in Rajasthan Sagri. The Cherry rayats of Tamil Nadu keep Bhumidasas. In Uttar Pradesh the Bhumidas is called Maat or Khandit-Mundit or Sanjayat. The Bhumidasas of the Laccadive Islands are Nadapu.

*Different names in different regions.*

*The system is slavery.*

*The marginal, the harijan, the tribal is its sacrifice.*

Douloti's body became useless to Latia by its continues use and he throws her away like a commodity. One morning Latia started screaming "Rampiyari! Hey Rampiyari! Call Mishir. Ask him to show me a new harijan girl. I am not having fun in Douloti anymore. These goods are threadbare now."

Douloti's rate dropped just to one rupee. She got decease. She went to Tohri hospital. Stays there about four days unconscious. Next day Douloti left the hospital. On the day of independence around the map of India that had been carefully drawn people were standing around the map. Filling the entire Indian peninsula from the oceans to the Himalayas, here lies bonded labour spread-eagled, kaiya –whore Douloti Nagesia's tormented corpse, putrefied with venereal disease, having vomited up all the blood in its desiccated lungs. Douloti's body becomes India. Douloti is all over India.

*References:*

1. Mahasweta Devi : *Imaginary Maps*; translated by *Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak*, Thema, Kolkata, 2015
2. <https://www.tandfonline.com>
3. <https://e-asianwomen.org>
4. <http://www.jstor.org>

