

**Mahasweta Devi's**

**Water**

## Mahasweta Devi

- an environmentalist and an activist.
- She involved herself completely in working for the betterment of the *adivasis*, the *Munda* tribal people.
- Awards
  - The Sahitya Akademi Award in 1979
  - The Jnanpith Award in 1996
  - The Magsaysay Award in 1997
- Tagore's influence on Mahasweta Devi.

# Water

- Maghai Dom is a water diviner
- Santosh Pujari the landlord
- The pitiable condition of the doms
- Jiten's plan of building a dam
- Santhosh and the SDO destroy the dam

## **Water as a Political Entity**

- Water becomes a tool to exhibit power politics
- Power politics centering on water
- Suffering: construction of dam or destruction dam

# Politics in Denying Water

## *Water*

- Democracy
- Caste discrimination
- Naxalites issue
- Water as a powerful tool

# Egoistic Individuals

Water:

Santosh Pujari

- Steals relief fund
- Government's own son-in-law
- Direct and indirect threats

2. SDO

- Supports Santosh Pujari
- Careless
- Aware of reality but doesn't bother
- Not sincere in his

# Marginalized people

## Water

- Accept their lot and suffer silently
- Untouchables
- Completely depend on Santhosh
- Hunger is their fate

# Power of Intelligence

## Water

- Celebrates the ancient wisdom of water divining
- Forefathers' gift
- Maghai's powers are exploited by the greedy



# Resistance to power

## Dhura

- Rebellion in his blood
- Dares to ask questions
- Helps the Naxalites
- Not accept  
untouchability
- Advises his father
- Refuses to accept their  
fate
- Major role in dam  
construction

## **Sub-text**

- Naxalites issue
- Subversion

# Good Samaritans

## *Water*

### ❖ Jiten

- Follower of Gandhiji
- Refuses pension
- Sincerity and integrity
- Brings awareness and solution
- A trouble shooter

# Violence

## Water

- Arrests
- Jiten attacked , Maghai critically wounded
- Police force with orders to shoot to kill
- People attack police

# Water as a source of life

- Water source- Charisa
- Drought leads death
- Women have to dig sand with bare hands
- People steal water
- Available only to the privileged

# Dam

## *Water*

- Dam as a means of sustenance
- Dam is like their soul
- Fulfillment of basic needs
- Destruction of dam leads to suffering
- Mahasweta supports small dams

# Relationship with Water

- Man-mistress relationship
- Maghai and Charisa
- Charisa helps him during water divining
- For Maghai she is a living woman
- He chooses to end his life with the water

## **Death**

### *Water*

- Maghai – willingly embracing death
- Struggles with police
- A true water diviner
- wants his body to be carried away by his mistress



# Environmental Overtones

## *Water*

- Ecofeminism
- Women among them are doubly exploited
- Domination of man

# Contemporary Relevance

- The Bali Raja dam *Water*
- Built by people by their own hands
- Symbol of small dams

## **Water as a Cultural Entity**

- Nature and Culture are two sides of a same coin
- Civilizations of the world have developed around water
- Hinduism considers water as holy

## Culture / Rituals

- Water divining
- Idol worship
- *Doms* are obedient
- Mother-in-law gives a new pitcher every festival
- Caste gives them their identity
- Caste discrimination is followed in schools too

# Myth

## *Water*

- King Bhagirath and Ganga
- Bhagirath - Maghai

# Dramatic Techniques

## Plot, Chorus, Language and Style

### *Water*

- A simple plot
- Forward narration, without any subplots
- Fourteen Scenes
- Realistic
- Evil wins and good is defeated
- Chorus- mostly Sung by women
- Language and Style- Language of *Doms*,
- Local Words