

# Flowering of the Feminine

*South Asian Women's Writings*



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**Department of English  
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## The Ecological Indigenous: A Reading of Mahasweta Devi's *Chotti Munda and His Arrow*

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*They had no sense of property. There was communal landholding, because, just like Native Americans, they also believed that land and forest and river belonged to everyone. Their society was of course broken under mainstream onslaught... They understood ecology and the environment in a way we cannot yet imagine.*

-Mahasweta Devi, "Author in Conversation" *Imaginary Maps*, p ii

Mahasweta Devi, widely acknowledged as a crusader of tribals is one of India's foremost edged writers. Her concern for the tribals and their immediate environment have spanned nearly the entirety of her career, providing the grounding for her speculative fiction. Her forceful, empathetic fiction has won her recognition in the form of the Sahitya Akademi and Jnanpith Awards, among several other literary honours. She was also awarded the Padmashree for her activist work among the dispossessed tribal communities. Through the lives of the tribals, she attempts to provide with a model of interconnection and respect for nature that one we must imagine and implement in order to meet the demands of ecological challenges.

Tribal Communities are the original inhabitants of the Earth. 'The Munda is considered the first comer in Indian Tribal society.' (Devi, xiii) They were nomadic tribes who later became agricultural cultivators. Related to land and labour, the tribals were



# Toward An Empirical Approach in Environmental Ethics: An Analysis of Sudha Murty's *Mahashweta*

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**Abstract:** Literature, the aesthetic display of subtle sentiments and universal thoughts, treasures in it notions transcending time and space. South Asian Literature houses the reflections of great writers whose perspectives on places and persons not only reveal their wide travelling experiences but also enlighten the readers on various national and cultural issues. The writers, particularly women, highlight the complex relationships pervading the society in terms of culture, politics, race, gender and environment. Sudha Murty is one such writer who underscores the significance of mutual respect and enduring affinity toward all beings in her novels. Revolving around the women protagonists, her novels portray illusions and prejudices prevailing in the society and the means by which her protagonists overcome them, influenced by their environments. Her *Mahashweta* is yet another sample of this and it relates the tale of Anupama who evolves as an enlightened being drawing inspiration from the environment. Despite the odds she faces in her life owing to leukoderma, Anupama finds the real meaning of life as rendered by nature. The paper analyses the light of ecocriticism. The necessity to acknowledge the worth of fellow beings is scrutinized with reference to environmental ethics, emphasizing an empirical approach complementing humanity and environment.

**Key Words:** Environmental Ethics, Sudha Murty, *Mahashweta*, Nature, Holmes Rolston III

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