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The Exploitative Role of Patriarchal and Capitalist Attitudes Towards the Tribals, Women and Nature in the Novel the Sickle

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Abstract

This article offers a critical analysis of Anita Agnihotri's The Sickle, examining the interconnected oppression of tribal communities, women, and the environment in rural Maharashtra. It reveals how capitalism and patriarchal values commodify both women and land, diminishing them to exploitable entities. By exploring the portrayal of female characters, the text highlights how patriarchal attitudes undermine bodily autonomy and restrict access to economic resources, education, and healthcare. Moreover, it illustrates the relationship between gender oppression and environmental degradation through an ecofeminist lens. Agnihotri's narrative highlights the need for a dual analysis to address these interconnected issues within marginalised communities. The findings contribute to ecofeminist discourse, showing how literature can critically engage with the links among social injustice, gender biases, and ecological exploitation, ultimately advocating for a more holistic approach to sustainable development.

Keywords: Patriarchy, Capitalism, Marginalisation, Sickle

INTRODUCTION

The seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of 2030 aim to ensure dignity to all and enable human beings to achieve their fullest potential. This entails “to end poverty and hunger everywhere; to combat inequalities within and among countries; to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies; to protect human rights and promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls; and to ensure the lasting protection of the planet and its natural resources. It also aims to create conditions for sustainable, inclusive, and sustained economic growth, shared prosperity and decent work for all, considering different levels of national development and capacities. These goals focus on bringing equality in terms of gender, class and status with special emphasis on the environment” (United Nations). There is no doubt that gender, class, status, and environment are interconnected, and neglecting anyone can disturb the whole scenario. Patriarchy and capitalism are still dominating in various regions, debarring the weaker section from their fundamental rights, as it does not let poor, women, and nature grow and flourish.

Capitalism is a system and understanding of economics that involves capital (investment, industrial activities) sourced from private capital, characterised by competition in the free market (Sugono), and the private sector carries all financial activities, with the government's role limited to a supervisor (Basid). Economic growth through the arrival of foreign capital is believed to be a panacea for reducing

poverty (Kartini et al.). However, from a communist ideological perspective, the capitalist system of society is seen as causing people suffering because it oppresses and undermines the role of ordinary people. This ideology is a response to the developed capitalist system of society. Where capitalism, in the name of economic growth, exploits the poor and nature, on the other hand, Patriarchy exploits women. It is a system that exists alongside capitalism.

Mitchell, a feminist psychologist, uses the word patriarchy "to refer to kinship systems in which men exchange women (Mitchell)." Walby defines "Patriarchy as a system of social structure and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women (Walby)." She explains patriarchy as a system because this helps us to reject the notion of biological determinism (which says that men and women are naturally different because of their biology or bodies and, are, therefore assigned different roles) or "the notion that every individual man is always in a dominant position and every woman in a subordinate one" (Ibid). Thus, patriarchy describes the institutionalised system of male dominance. So, we can usefully define patriarchy as a set of social relations between men and women, which have a material base, and which, though hierarchical, establish or create independence and solidarity among men that enable them to dominate women (Jagger and Rosenberg). The paper critically analyses the condition of tribals, women and nature in the light of these terms. The paper highlights the suppression and exploitation of tribals, nature and women in patriarchal and capitalist society.

The Marathwada district of Maharashtra is characterised by extensive sugarcane farming. Due to the continuous drought and the unavailability of water resources in this region, and a lack of government support, the tribals and poor farmers are forced to leave their native place along with their families to nearby districts to work as labourers in sugarcane fields to be exploited by capitalist society. The injustice is apparent in their social and economic status where they are shown to be suffering from severe drought and financial crises; the capitalist society is making money by growing the sugarcane crop, which requires much water. These mukadams and mill owners, with their conservative focus on profitability, use land as a mere asset available to support financial gain as much as possible. This view has instigated the commercialization and industrialization of farming, processes that focus on the short-term economic returns. The novel also focuses on the process of mechanization and its adverse effects on the traditional practices of farming by introducing machinery in farming, chemical fertilisers, and monoculture. These alterations have led to degradation of the land, loss of biodiversity, and exhaustion of the natural resource base (Drucza & Peveri).

Tribals and women, mainly from these regions, face various forms of oppression, subordination, and domination within a patriarchal culture. These systems reinforce the notion that rich men must dominate both the land and the resources, while the poor are subjugated. As a result, they are treated as machines, and not living beings, and they cannot freely make their own choices. They lack access to education, healthcare, and employment sources, which only serves to prolong and strengthen their dependence upon the dominant group. Such inequalities are underpinned by cultural practices and legal frameworks that fail to uphold their rights, instead subordinating them.

This is also evident in the case of women, where patriarchal forces escalate their management in the prospect of controlling the land (Drucza & Peveri). In her work, Theorizing Patriarchy, Walby (1990) describes patriarchy as a structure in which men keep women subordinate, subjugated, and exploited through practice and institutions. This is seen in the daily social suffering of tribal women, where they are subjected to violence, allowed limited mobility, and economically dominated. The Sickle by Anita Agnihotri is a perfect example of the exploitation of women, nature and tribals in a patriarchal and

capitalist society.

An Indian Bengali Poet and writer, Anita Agnihotri, is a prolific writer. Her works have been translated into several prominent Indian and foreign languages, including English, Swedish and German. Born and brought up in Kolkata, she was selected for the Indian Administrative Services (IAS) in 1980 for the Odisha cadre. Providing a 37-year career in the civil services, she retired in 2016 as secretary, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India. Anita had an interest in writing since her childhood. During her school days, she wrote for the renowned filmmaker Satyajit Ray's children's magazine Sandesh, which gave her confidence and shaped her literary career. Her works are comparable to those of the renowned Bengali writer Mahashweta Devi. Her notable works are Mahuldiha (novella), Mahanadi, Kaste, Mahakantar, Labanakta, Aynay Manush Nai (2023) and many more. Besides fiction, she writes poetry, short stories, children's and Juvenile literature, essays and non-fiction. The Sickle is a translation of her work Kaste by Arunava Sinha. Benyamin, a Malayalam writer, states about her work: "This novel, which tells the shocking story of rural men and a peasant life destined to sink into misery, is a must–read in contemporary India." The book is a journey into western Maharashtra, exposing how infanticide, assault based on caste and gender, feudal labour relations and climate crisis impact the lives of people.

According to the Migrant Forum in Asia, under the Article "The Plight of Migrant Workers", migrant workers generally take up jobs known as 3Ds (Dirty, Demeaning and Dangerous), which nationals of labour-receiving countries shun. They also experience subtle and overt acts of discrimination and xenophobia based on the intersection of race, class, gender and religious beliefs. The novel is one example of the distress migration of people due to the climate crisis caused by capitalist society. Rajat Chaudhuri, in his article, states that the novel is " about the plight of the sugarcane laborers, the indebtedness of cotton farmers, implementation bottle-necks that withhold forest rights from indigenous people, irrigation scams and misdirected polices" which play in concert to affect human lives. He further compares the plight of these labourers with the migrants in the backdrop of the Great Depression of John Steinbeck's timeless novel, The Grapes of Wrath. Chaudhuri further states that Agnihotri's novel addresses climate justice and its complex interplay with economics and politics, and shares its humanism and the ability to tell stories about collectives of people in the face of adversity. The Sickle is a bold experiment with form, where the story is interspersed with facts, figures, and even names of real organisations, such as the All India Kisan Sabha. The effect is being able to peer right into the bed of the narrative stream with its scars and obstructions, its secret channels and gathering detritus. It paints a stark and memorable picture of deprivation and suffering against scorched and denuded earth.

The Sickle depicts the plight of migrant workers who are mainly tribal people. They are such semi-nomadic tribes who have been neglected for ages. During colonial times, these were classified as criminal tribes. In the post-colonial period, however, their level was upgraded to Vimukt Jaati Tribe; their upgradation didn't improve their status and they are still the first to be suspected if any crime happens. The novel is a tale of the sufferings of people who need to be noticed and reformed, as they are not provided with the necessities to live. Situated in the Marathwada region, the Terna area frequently experiences drought, leading to severe water scarcity. Once this drought, called as Dushkal, struck their region, it tended to continue for years on end. As "water in the fields they farmed and no work in the village, they had no choice but to go elsewhere to make a living" (3). Thus, these climate crises forced these immigrant workers to leave their places and travel to neighbouring sugarcane fields to harvest the crop.

In one region, many people are facing severe water scarcity, while conversely, affluent landowners are capitalising on the cultivation of sugarcane, a crop known for its substantial water requirements. This stark contrast highlights the inequality in resource allocation and agricultural practices between socio-economic classes. As these tribes are debarred from owning private lands, they mainly depend on natural resources and carve out intricate ecological niches for survival.

Another factor driving the forced migration of these people is insufficient rainfall and recurring drought conditions in the region. Unsustainable deforestation has caused a dramatic reduction in land cover, decreasing from approximately one-third to a mere five per cent. Additionally, the over-extraction of water resources to irrigate sugarcane fields has resulted in a concerning decline in groundwater levels. The changes in ecology and environment have seriously affected their livelihood options. All the water has been sucked up from the mother's breast and the Manjira dam has almost dried up due to continuous drought.

Living with deep-rooted insecurities, these people are compelled to toil day and night for minimal wages. Their lives are divided into six-month periods: one spent in their villages and the other in shanties built adjacent to the sugarcane fields. As local workers are unwilling to take on jobs in the sugarcane fields due to the low wages, the result is that these laborers are unduly exploited by making them do "a unique kind of labour, whose cycle had no real room for what would qualify as the legal definitions of a break" (13). They were made to work for "twenty to twenty-two hours a day" (14).

They are treated not as humans but as 'sickles'.As stated in the novel, "Humans were 'sickles' here, they had no names but numbers. Families were the units for counting sickles, husband and wife adding up to one. If an adult child, brother or brother-in-law was present, the number went up" (13-14). These Banjaris are scattered across Marathwada in Maharashtra and some parts of Andhra Pradesh. They were forest nomads initially, after which they became traders, loading their bullock carts with rice, salt and pulses and selling them in distant lands, going all the way to the coastal areas, even to Surat. However, their trading method suffered a setback after the British set up railway lines. They were identified as being inclined to commit crimes during the British era. After Independence, they had been declared a 'denotified tribe'- but liberty was still far away. The government act that once damned them has been abolished, but the Banjaris are still the first to be suspected when petty crimes occur and are picked up by the local police. The torture in lockup, the molestation and humiliation of their women, have all become routine for them.

Patriarchal Structures in The Sickle

Patriarchy refers to a socio-political structure wherein men predominantly occupy leadership roles across political, moral, and other influential societal domains. The ramifications of this systemic bias extend beyond mere gender disparities (Peluso). This mindset not only marginalises women and other vulnerable groups but also undermines the integrity of ecological systems and land sovereignty. In this context, patriarchy operates via a dual mechanism of oppression, subjugating women and marginalised groups while concurrently exploiting natural resources and the environment. Human and ecological entities are treated as commodities subject to ownership, use, and control. These essential dynamics of patriarchal exploitation emphasise power through systematic oppression, asserting dominion over women, similarly to the exploitation of land for immediate economic gain, often at the cost of sustainable stewardship. This approach gives rise to detrimental environmental practices, including pollution, deforestation, and unsustainable agricultural practices that degrade soil health and biodiversity.

Thus, the ideological structure that facilitates the subjugation of women and marginalised people mirrors the economic exploitation of nature, perpetuating a cycle of destruction that adversely impacts both the societal system and ecological integrity (Dixon).

The plight of women engaged in sugarcane cultivation is dire. They reside in makeshift shelters near the fields for six months during the harvesting season and face significant risks to their safety. They are exposed to the potential violence from mukadams and sugar mill agents, thus creating a pervasive atmosphere of fear and insecurity in their living conditions. Agnihotri states their condition, "it was the fear that always raced across the minds of young women at night here in these shanties like a jagged flash of lightning" (5). When Terna, wife of a migrant worker was raped by one of the mukadam, instead of consoling or wiping her tears her husband orders her to remove her uterus. She was threatened by her husband that, "[t]here will be many dogs to sniff around you here, whether you hate it or enjoy it is your choice. But if it gets you pregnant, I'll kick you out of the house" (8-9). Consequently, these pitiful women, often without fault of their own, are frequently subjected to domination, control, and exploitation by men in various manifestations. The woman calls her man "malak, for malik, her lord and master" (25). The novel illustrates that the lack of necessities, such as bathrooms and toilets, also compels them to pursue the surgical removal of their uterus.

"Sewing up the tubes was a makeshift arrangement; it didn't even work all the time, and there was the monthly problem of the flow. Here, there were neither bathrooms nor toilets. Where were eight-month pregnant women to go? But if you didn't have a uterus, you didn't have a problem either" (8). They are treated as machines and not humans and the uterus of women is described as "childbearing vessel."

Back in the village, too, women were expected to perform all the tasks, whereas the menfolk would often gamble, drink and blow up their money. If the food was not served properly, they were beaten mercilessly. They had to do all the work and were not allowed to complain. Women were not acknowledged for their labour at home as well as in the field. The lines stated in the novel pose a question to their identity in this world.

Not in the home, not on the land, not by the cattle
Not of the crop
Not in the pots, not in the pans
Where are we then?
A dead bull fetches insurance, the peasant sheds his tears
But when a woman dies...? (59)

These women remain unrecognised and undervalued; even cattle hold more worth, as their deaths can yield insurance payouts. In contrast, when a woman passes away, no one mourns her death. The birth of a girl child is often met with disappointment. In their tribe, there was a tradition that when a couple had consecutive daughters, the last one would be named Nakoshi, signifying "no more." Over time, "Nakoshi" evolved into "Nahishi," reflecting a societal shift from "no more" to "disappeared"(51). Pre-determination of sex being illegal is shown to be very common in this region. The unwantedness of a girl child is so compelling that "[t]hose who won't raise money to repair a tap when it stops working, who won't move an inch when a fallen tree blocks the road, they're the ones who queue up at doctor's clinics, plotting to kill unborn girls" (105). The birth of a daughter, even in a prosperous farmer's family, is a source of lamentation and unhappiness. Having a daughter means anguish, expense and regret. In poor families or small farmers' families, the birth of a daughter means 'ek kaita kami,' one sickle less. A male is going to add to the number of sickles in the family, whereas feeding, clothing and educating a

female child is a waste of money.

Despite the legal provision of prohibiting the marriage of girls prior to the age of eighteen, this practice was widespread in the Marathwada region. Within this mindset, a young girl who reaches maturity is often perceived as a source of shame and a burden for her family. They believed that "[a]s soon as a girl attains puberty, she becomes an object of shame for her parents and grandparents. Now that she has grown up, there is a danger everywhere; it isn't safe for her to remain at home. Why bother with school either- had education made life more secure for women, after all" (72).

As they lived a nomadic or semi-nomadic life even a hundred years ago, and since they live in the area with the lowest rainfall and irrigation in the state, their plight in the sugarcane toils does not particularly move the urban culturati. People treat them based on their past, and society's indifference ensures that their situation is acceptable. Applying the rights of Maratha Hindu community, banjari society expects complete submission from its women, consigning them to a life behind the veil, getting girls married in their teens, using the pretext of an insecure future for the unborn girl child to queue up at clinics to have the sex of their foetuses determined, and, finally, if the child on its way is not a male, having it aborted. Their rootless and marginal existence in the past and the calumny of criminal propensity they carry have attracted them to mainstream culture, where the woman is both the bearer of family honour and a commodity at the same time (19)."Thus, women as well as nature are shown to be treated as commodities meant to be controlled and exploited.

Capitalist attitude

Capitalism is an economic framework characterised by private capital investment and industrial activities, focusing on competition within a free market structure (Sugono). Foreign investment is often regarded as a viable alternative for alleviating high poverty rates (Kartini et al.). Economic functions primarily reside within the private sector, with governmental roles limited to regulatory oversight. It is a form of communism that perpetuates suffering among marginalised populations by prioritising the interests of the elite (Basid). Capitalism still thrives in India. As is well known, the exploitation of natural resources, as the fruit of capitalism, is still happening, even more quietly. One of the cruelties of capitalism and its impact can be seen on the Tribes in Marathhwada, Maharashtra. Forms of violations from mill owners who overrule ecology make the tribal people restless and enraged. The smooth system of capitalism is sourced from permits and support from local government officials. With official permission, the investors dredge the produce without leaving a grain of hope for the surrounding community affected. Under the pretext of national progress, people are forced to swallow reality bitter. The Tribe's niche and forest ecosystems are damaged, and people's livelihoods are lost, psychologically, and mentally they are disturbed.

The selfish character of capitalism is also reflected in the attitude of the company owners. They are concerned only with their personal and group needs. Even if the environment screams in pain, they will never look and give birth to concern. They glorify their power and consider it to be everything (Namang). The author states that sugarcane has dominated the politics of Maharashtra ever since the rise of the cooperative sugarcane mills or sakhar factories in the 1970s. The word 'cooperative' is pleasing to the ear; the farmer supplying the sugarcane is a shareholder in the mill, according to the cooperatives. However, when the urge to control everything takes over, not even a smattering of principles remains in place. The big farmers strengthen and control everything, including politicians.Though they all are well aware of the fact that "continuing to grow sugarcane during a major water crisis upsets the balance of

agricultural production, that the cultivation of millet and peanut and sunflower is dropping, that water resources as well food for humans and animals are being stretched, that the underground water levels are going down" (22)but still they are into making money. As a result of this, several money-making rackets have sprung up around the conflict between drought and the availability of water. Tons of water in the Latur district are supplied to the fields through trains, but the poor are excluded from it.

Their condition is shown to be worsening with time. It appeared that "Marathwada would never be rid of its difficult days. People connected to the government were spending money hand over fist to ensure the continuation of bad times. Rich people wanted profits where their capital was invested, and the poor had no choice but to throng to the shanties for a livelihood" (8).

Mechanisation has added fuel to their miseries. With the coming of harvest machines, these workers are about to lose their jobs. Mill owners found machines to be more comfortable than humans. Sagar starts thinking about their future on seeing such gigantic machines; "With more machines at work, they would have no more work in a few years, or perhaps the contractors would force down their wages and advances. What would they do then? The migrant workers would wither away in their own homes and die" (57).

Severe drought and water crisis have brought together all the people of Marathwada, whether they are landowners, landless, or marginal farmers, to a single platform, forcing them to become labourers in western Maharashtra. Capitalism is not only eating away forests, poisoning rivers, and slashing citizens, but the impact of capitalist injustice is also evident in the advice and infrastructure of the village residents. The roads are still full of potholes and muddy. This, of course, hinders the mobility of citizens; it also affects other aspects of life, such as the economy, education, and health. It is no wonder that so many citizens are low educated and poor.

These migrant workers are deprived of necessities like potable water. "Instead of clean water, they had to drink the wastewater from the sugar cane field out of cupped hands, which made their throats burn." (63). Their children were devoid of necessities like proper schooling. Spending six to seven months in shanties, they could not continue their schooling in the village, and if they thought of sending them here, then the school ran out of a room in the mill, damp, without fresh air, the walls not even whitewashed. It was a long walk across the road, and there was no teacher. Meanwhile, there is another quote that illustrates that government officials turned out to be more supportive of the company.

The Government or the system is least concerned about them; people are ready to spend lakhs of rupees on religious ceremonies, but not ready to spend a penny on improving their condition. At the entrance of Marathwada village, there stood an ashram named the Srikshetra Jnanshwari Ashram. On an auspicious occasion, more than a lakh of rupees were spent on having the scriptures read. However, when the buildings of the only primary school collapsed, none of the villagers were ready to contribute even a paisa for its repair. These people, lacking the necessities of life, have adapted to this dark life. They live in the world of ignorance and unawareness, where for them, life is to work in the sugarcane field and then coming back to the village for four months. Instead of working for the purgation of their village, these menfolk are entirely immersed in gambling and drinking. Continuous drought has driven these peasants into theft. Indumati, a member of Dayatai's team, narrates a live incident to Daya about how unfavourable climatic conditions have forced peasants to resort to theft. She expatiates;

"Even peasants are turning into thieves. Just last year, I was sleeping in the yard next to my mother–in–law, the night was sultry…. Suddenly, I saw a man sitting on one khatia … I was frozen with fear …he was removing the old woman's nose ring, can you believe it, he was actually unscrewing it. I was

watching him, but I couldn't do anything … even my mother–in–law must have been awake, but she was too frightened to make a noise…" (Pg100).

The suicide of Umesh, a cotton farmer, represents a significant plot development in the narrative. Faced with insurmountable debt and the psychological burden of societal pressure exacerbated by harassment towards his wife, Vaishali, Umesh's desperate circumstances culminate in his tragic decision to take his own life. This event underscores the broader socio-economic challenges faced by agrarian communities, including the precarious nature of smallholder farming, the vulnerability to market fluctuations, and the impact of systemic financial strain on mental health. The novel states the bitter reality of the condition of farmers by stating facts, "There was nothing new about a cotton farmer dying by suicide; if calculations were too hard, 300 to 400 farmers took their own lives every year in each district of Vidarbha" (168).

A peasant is like a father to his land, taking care of it like a child, protecting it from all adversities. The system is responsible for their failure, but the government blames them to save their skin, as stated in the novel:

"When a peasant kills himself, the government tries to absolve itself by blaming his cowardice, illness or depression- otherwise the image of a shining nation would be dulled. The administration doesn't want to acknowledge that a farmer who has spent his entire life protecting his land from the onslaught of sun and rain, who has seen the unforgiving side of nature, who has felt the unbearable flames of summer, is not going to give up so easily, unless the withered crop, the unirrigated field, the creeping venom of rising debt, and the humiliation from creditors, all join hands to tell him, you have no recourse but death" (175).

Global warming, exacerbated by the overexploitation of resources, has increased the problems manifold. Despite being aware of the water crisis and declining underground water level, governments, instead of changing polices in favour of farmers, "are controlled by the people who are grabbing profits with both hands- contractors and industrialists. On the one hand, industry is taking away water meant for irrigation, and on the other, thousands of crores of rupees from public funds are being spent on preserving water" (187).

The results that emerged after Ranjan examined the satellite map were alarming. There has been a sharp rise in the number of drought-prone districts from 66 to 405, since the 1960s until the beginning of the twenty-first century. The reasons stated are global warming and the overexploitation of groundwater resources. The government is least concerned about these crises and the condition of farmers. As stated in the novel:

"The government's economic policies have changed over the past two decades; industrialists are its advisers now. Potable water in the reservoirs is dwindling, no water is available for irrigation, and yet the state committee has sanctioned water for industrial parks, several lakhs of cubic litres from fifty-one reservoirs. It has felt no need to consult farmers" (186).

The plight of farmhands, small and middle farmers, is heart–wrenching. Farmhands, being nomadic, are hardy people determined to survive, whereas the farmers die by suicide. They are the ones who grow crops, take loans with the hope that this time their harvest will double and enable them to pay back their loans. Unfortunately, when they fail and their loan amount starts piling up, they start looking for an escape from debt, from farming, from life.

The novel serves as a poignant commentary on the precarious conditions faced by marginalised farmers, vividly illustrating their struggles with a pervasive sense of hopelessness. It highlights systemic failures, including the ineffectiveness of governmental open-door policies, the absence of actionable guidance

from agricultural experts, and the complicity of financial institutions that allow large borrowers to default without consequence while rendering smallholders vulnerable to crippling debt. The psychological and social pressures on these farmers intensify when they are unable to meet their loan obligations. Moreover, official statements advocating for farmers often fail to reach a significant portion of those affected, undermining potential support initiatives. Despite the grim realities depicted in the narrative, characters like Daya Tai emerge as a beacon of resilience, actively working to uplift the communities. Her character exemplifies the possibility that, despite institutional challenges, meaningful interventions can create pathways to improve livelihoods, offering a glimmer of hope for the realisation of a more equitable existence.

Conclusion

This paper presents a compelling case for the immediate implementation of sustainable governmental policies that prioritise the welfare of all societal sectors over the interests of a privileged minority. Fictional narratives play a crucial role in reshaping public attitudes towards climate change and elucidating the challenges faced by marginalised populations, particularly tribal communities. Illiteracy represents a significant impediment to the socio-economic advancement of these groups, exacerbated by insufficient healthcare and sanitation systems, which contribute to deleterious health outcomes and persistent poverty. Many individuals within these communities find themselves caught in debilitating cycles of debt due to limited economic opportunities. This economic exploitation, compounded by a lack of awareness regarding educational and technological advancements, solidifies their socio-cultural marginalisation. The depiction of tribal experiences in literature offers vital perspectives on the multifaceted realities of these communities, highlighting the common adversities they encounter. It is critical for both governmental and non-governmental organizations to formulate and implement actionable strategies that address these pressing issues, grounded in humanitarian principles. As engaged stakeholders within society, we have the responsibility to elevate awareness and foster discourse on these concerns, participating in advocacy initiatives that champion ecological integrity and the safeguarding of tribal communities and the environment. The character of Daya Tai exemplifies this commitment, serving as an inspiring model for dedication to these principles.

"The Sickle" significantly enriches the discourse by authentically portraying the lived experiences of tribal peoples and women, while promoting the pursuit of a more equitable society. Anita Agnihotri's contributions exemplify a crucial advancement in our collective drive to advocate for environmental protection and uphold the rights of tribal communities and women. Indian literature has made notable strides in incorporating tribal characters and articulating their challenges, thereby providing a platform that enhances respect for nature, empowers women, and affirms the dignity of tribal populations. The government must address these urgent issues; failure to do so risks exacerbating the detrimental impacts of capitalism on these vulnerable groups. It is our shared responsibility to advocate for these causes and work toward a more just and sustainable future.

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