
Empowerment of Women in Sudha Murty's Novel 'Mahashweta'

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Abstract:

The women empowerment movement in India took rapid strides in the wake of nationalist ideas in the nineteenth century. A well-known name in Indian English writing is Sudha Murthy. Her entire body of literary work has as its main goals the empowerment of women and the teaching of their own rights. Her works show a development in women's psychic awareness of their place in society. The finest way to explore the idea of a new empowered woman who is more powerful than any man is through Mahashweta. The paper's major objective is to present a lady as a role model for the female community. The novel underlines that women can be independent thinkers rather than being controlled by men as they once were. The primary issue with women is that they are more focused on their husbands while their husbands neglect and mistreat their own wives. Women reject their husbands at this time and forget their own identities. The most significant jab at the patriarchal culture comes from the novel Mahashweta. In the novel, Anupama decides to divorce her spouse and embrace her new, independent existence. Sudha Murthy's "Mahashweta" is the best illustration of

how to dispel generalised misconceptions about women and demonstrate how important they are to society. Protagonist craves for identity in the suffocated patriarchal system and takes a new step and birth towards empowerment. This journey leads to empowerment at one extent to another.

Keywords: Empowerment, society, Mahashweta, Patriarchal System.

The most well-known name in Indian feminism writing is Sudha Murthy. She is the person who has set the best model for all Indian ladies through the course of her life. The fundamental trait she develops in herself is education, which makes her the first Indian woman engineer and opens new paths for women in novel fields. Her journey from engineer to owner of the most well-known Infosys firm motivates everyone to give back to society.

Today, Infosys also makes a sizable profit, and it donates that profit to government agencies for the benefit of

humanity. She is the best novelist of Indian descent who writes in English because of the way her pleasant nature comes out in her work. Ms. Murthy is well known for writing in the local language of Kannada, and afterwards practically all of her works were translated into English. The character of Make her the head of the Infosys Foundation to give back to society. This organisation focuses mostly on health and education concerns in the nation. Murthy joins the Gates organisation, an organisation that promotes public health care, and via this organisation, she has started numerous programmes for Indians. She provided computer facilities in every school in Karnataka since she was the best teacher and always encouraged her students to help the community.

Because to Ms. Murthy's efforts to construct "The Murthy Classical Library of India" at Harvard University, understanding of Indian culture has become widely known throughout the nation. Doller Bahu is Murthy's most well-known and much acclaimed literary creation. She gained fame and notoriety in feminist literature because of the book Mahashweta. The same book is chosen for discussion and analysis from a feminist perspective in the research paper. The work Mahashweta contains further fresh perspectives on feminist themes like new empowered women, radical feminism, space, or identity. The Mother I Never Knew, Three Thousand Stitches, The Old Man and His God, The Serpent Revenge, Gently Falls The Bakula, House of Cards, Something Happened On

The Way To Heavens, The Magic Drum and Other Favourite Tales, The Bird With The Golden Wings, How The Sea Became Salty, The Upside Down King, and The Daughter are just a few of the literary works on the name of Ms. Murthy.

Mahashweta is one of the best examples to show society how strong fighter women are for establishing their own identities. The idea that men can influence women is prevalent in society, however Mahashweta effectively disproves this notion. The main character subverts society's psychology and forgets her own identity and position in the world. Roshni Duhan comments very aptly as,

Literature is not only a reflection of the society but also serves as a corrective mirror in which members of the society can look at themselves and find the need for positive change.

It is necessary to take a close look at some works of literature, in order to understand how literature actually reflects the society. (Duhan192)

Husbands hide their identities, but women carve out their own places in society through perseverance.

Mahashweta, protagonist that challenges the notion of human domination in society and forges her own identity, represents the idea of the new woman. The majority of the novel Mahashweta's attention is given to the plight of women with skin conditions that cause colour

changes in their skin. The shift in her skin's colour caused her to consult a dermatologist, which altered her life, caused her happiness to crumble, and left her all alone in the world. Even her spouse, whom she most trusts because he is a doctor, declines to assist her. She decides to earn her own wealth because the trauma in her past has taught her that no other person will step up to aid her. She won't have any problems with her skin in life, but her husband won't accept her because she was his choice, according to the doctor. Anupama's beauty draws her husband to her, yet when that same beauty develops rashes on her body, he becomes impatient with her and decides to leave. The author criticises this attitude of men who believe they are superior in society.

The author depicts a woman who rebels against male dominance and forgets her own identity rather than crouching and pleading for her life. At the story's conclusion, it is noted that Anupama's husband is prepared to accept her, but she disputes the claim. The author describes Anupama, one of the city's most attractive girls, in the opening pages of the book. She has devoted her life to social work, and she uses the proceeds from her theatre business to support charitable trusts. She sells show tickets door to door to raise as much money as possible for the trust fund. She is a stunning young lady who is also a talented singer and actor in the theatre. Her encounter with Anand at Dr. Desai's residence transforms her life, and she and Anand fall in love. Since Dr. Anand comes

from a wealthy family, preparing her for marriage was not a difficult task for him. At the same time, Anupama thought this was the best marriage proposal.

In addition to his mother Radhakka, Dr. Anand's family consists of his sister Girija. Before getting married, Anupama's life was not all roses because of the way her stepmother and stepsister treated her. Her two sisters were her rivals for love before she got married, and Girija still fills that role after the wedding.

Both parties are content that Dr. Anand is covering all costs due to his financial situation. Due to her stepmother's intense displeasure at witnessing this lavish wedding, Anupama's father and Anupama only experienced this bliss in similar circumstances. Anupama has the best spouse to take care of her, according to Murthy's story. According to the author's description, Anupama's spouse intends to pursue higher education abroad in the future.

After their marriage, Dr. Anand decides to continue his education in England, leaving Anupama alone herself to care for her mother-in-law. These three ladies are currently quite unhappy at home due to the natures of Girija, who is very liberal, Mother in Law, who is very domineering, and Anupama, who is very submissive. Anupama is uncomfortable about Girija's association with her male buddy because Girija always has a contraception on her. Girija has never liked Anupama in the family because the two of them are on the same page. As a result,

Girija makes Anupama chastise her mother. Radhakka never like seeing Anupama at home since she is against her daughter. Girija earned her mother's distrust so greatly that she reprimanded Anupama instead of listening to her. Anupama was drawn to a packet of pills for oral contraception that was concealed inside and had a note on it that read, "After 10 p.m." (page no. 39). Girija's temperament irritated Anupama to the point where she discovered her most disobedient child at home. When she persuaded her mother to accompany her on a college field trip to Belur and Halebeedu, she was constantly telling lies. Anupama learned the truth—such a vacation had never been planned by her college. Anupama revealed Girija's scheme, which cost her dearly and caused discourtesy in the household. Anupama was a brand-new woman who never wanted to exhibit or flaunt her possessions to the public, but her mother-in-law was fundamentally opposed to this. Her sole function was to be ornamented and shown as a possession, a reflection of their social standing. She had no idea she would lead such a life. On the first Diwali at her new home, Anupama suffers burns to her legs while bringing a hot coal to light the incense, which causes her life to change forever. In order to light the incense for the deity, Radhakka sent Anupama to gather the hot coals. Anupama's foot was seriously burned when a hot coal dropped on it while she was returning from the kitchen. She walked to the hall to conduct the puja in

silence after discreetly pouring some cold water on her foot.

Anupama was unable to report the burn problem to his mother because of the extreme masculine dominance in society. This is the best illustration of a woman trying to dominate other women in society. Anupama's visit to the dermatologist caused her mother-in-law's wrath to fall on her. Where she never musters the courage to discuss her injury, which results in leukoderma, openly. This is an example of a power system in society that prevents the victim from speaking up even when she is in the right. The husband and wife's relationship has not developed to the point where she feels comfortable discussing her issues. It becomes more apparent in society that "women are not born, but rather become" as a result of social norms. Anupama's life is altered by the white patch incident, and she thereafter gains an untouchable status in the family. The narrative makes the point that she was denied entry to the temple and that the house's staff treated her badly because they didn't respect her. Anupama's desire of staying with her husband overseas was dashed, and she had to leave his home. Her life has been completely upended by the circumstances, and not even her husband Anand could provide any assistance.

The women of the modern day are not born; rather, they are created to battle and demonstrate to society that one can build one's own destiny without a man's assistance. Anand should have stood by his wife in such a difficult moment as a

husband, yet he left to answer her letters while simultaneously denying to confront his mother.

In a culture ruled by men, where they are never the victim but rather the norm, the rules are constructed to support them. Anand therefore refuses to assist her in her situation of husband-and-wife separation and keeps a low profile. Anupama's mother begins looking for another girl for her son Anand because the rich society views her innocence as an unfit woman. Anupama considers suicide after being depressed and resolves to take her own life. Anupama was unable to think of anything new to ponder about in her life as the concept of this difficulty entered her thoughts. She recalls how there was always a happy ending in the drama days, but her life was on the verge of being over. In one of the incidents in the novel, Anupama takes first step towards empowered when she takes the decision to leave the house.

Anupama went to her room, collected the few things that belonged to her, picked up one of Anand's photographs and returned where Shamanna waited for her. She took his hand in hers, and silently clutching her bag, walked out of the house. She knew in her heart that this was the last time she would be seeing the house or its people...but she did not look back even once. (59)

Anupama, a newlywed, comes to the conclusion that if her sister-in-law, who engages in numerous relationships, enjoys a

great life and finds the best rich partner for marriage, then why can't she? When she leads a morally upright life. Immediately after considering suicide, the brave woman resolves to make her own sacrifices in order to live a happy and honorable life. This is the birth of a new lady.

She rejects all the teasing that has been directed at her and travels to Bombay in order to obtain employment and live on her own. "Anupama climbed down the steps. Whatever the circumstances she found herself in, she would meet the challenge head-on, and win. She was now ready to face the world, determined to stand on her own feet and build a new life for herself" (Murty 79).

Anupama's life in Bombay was no longer the same because she had to depart from her friend Sumithra's as her husband's behaviour towards her has changed. She currently resides in the home of her close friend Sumi and teaches Sanskrit at a nearby college. Even Dr. Vasanth's suggestion is rejected. She declines the offer, claiming she no longer wants to be involved with the family and its discrimination.

how can you possibly expect a burnt seed to grow into a tree? Husband, children, affection, love...they are all irrelevant to me now. It is too late for us. I am no longer the naïve Anupama whose world revolved around you. I know what my goals are and where I am heading, and I don't need anyone's help to reach my destination. (Murty 148)

As she abstains from the institution of marriage, Anupama shows the development of a new woman within her. She shows that a woman can live her own life without a man's help. Finally, Anupama becomes empowered who thinks they are never less superior to male and draw a picture new self-independent woman of millennium who is far away from the fear of patriarchal system.

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