

Sudha Murthy's Mahashweta – A Sprinkler of Confidence to the Victimized

Dr. M. Revathi, Lecturer in English, Govt. Degree College for Women, Srikalahasti, Andhra Pradesh

Article Received: 20/03/2022, Article Accepted: 6/05/2022, Published online: 07/05/2022,
DOI:10.36993/RJOE.2022.7.2.18

Abstract:

Indian English Literature, specifically, writings of the women writers, depicts the social realities and the reflection of the life of women, their victimization, and self reliance, quest for equality and identity. They also focus on the human emotions and behavior of men and some women towards the women in the marital society. Sudha Murthy a venerable writer in Indian English Literature is also a well-known person as a trustee of the Infosys Foundation but also as. Almost every work from her pen, sprinkles a human value or a moral to lead a humanistic life. Her works like **Gently Falls the Bakula** and **Mahashweta** reflect the life of women who develop courage and confidence to live from the turmoil in their life journey. Sudha Murthy's novel, **Mahashweta** (2005), looks as a hope and solaces to the victims of Leukoderma, a skin disease through the character Anupama a sufferer from leukoderma in the present paper.

Keywords: Social dogmas, Turmoils, victimization, courage and confidence, Social awareness

Introduction

Indian Women's Writings have received much acclamation globally. The writers like Arudathi Roy, Sashi Desh Pande, Jumpha Lahari, Manju Kapoor, Kiran Desai, Sudha Murthy, etc., tend to probe the human relationships, social scenarios, plight of the educated women and problems of being women. The present paper is on Sudha Murthy's novel **Mahashweta** which portrays the life of a well educated, intelligent and beautiful woman who marries a doctor and becomes a victim due to a white patch on her body. It is a story of courage and perseverance that the protagonist Anupama developed from within herself to break the social stigma to lead a life of her own by moving to the city. She has achieved fame through her acting and teaching. She creates awareness on various social stigmas to the students.

In her postscript of this book, Sudha Murthy is overjoyed and has said "Never in my wildest dreams had I thought that an ordinary person like me would change somebody's life". Dr. Sumati Kshetra made, a Marathi writer, first wrote the novel with the name **Mahashweta**. Sudha Murthy, has written with the same name with the theme of a woman's plight in her married life after being affected by Leukoderma. The protagonist has been

disregarded by in-laws and has been abandoned by her husband. Her in-law's attitude towards her has made her persistent to lead her life on her own.

The protagonist Anupama, a graduate student with an extraordinary beauty has actively participated in college activities, directed and enacted plays. Once, she translated and dramatized a love scene from the novel *Kadambari* by Bana Bhatta, in Sanskrit. The scene is between the heroine, Mahashweta and the hero Pundarika. Anupama performed the role of Mahashweta in a play. After the play, she received a great applause from the audience. Anand, a young handsome doctor who has watched the play, is fascinated by Anupama's sweet voice and beauty and compares her with Parijatha. He loves Anupama for her beauty and intelligence. Anupama has the blessings of Saraswathi but is destined to struggle for life as the eldest daughter of a poor village school teacher. Anupama is practical and well aware of her situation. She has met a handsome person, Dr Anand, just like in the fairy-tale of Cinderella. On the other hand, Anand who is rich, anxious to marry Anupama has convinced her mother, who is traditional and gets married to Anupama, his dream girl. In the initial days, for Anupama, life has seemed "a perennial fountain of joy, of love and happiness." (36-37). After three months, Anand went to England to improve his prospects. Radhakka, who traditionally gives much priority for materialistic life, is reluctant towards her daughter-in-law. She doesn't want her daughter-in-law to be shined and

reflected brilliantly by all the wealth they have. Radhakka plans to perform Lakshmi Puja with Anupama. On the day of Lakshmi Puja a "piece of red-hot piece of coal has fallen on Anupama's foot. After some days she has found a small white patch on her leg which is very odd.

Fate turns against Anupama in the name of the white patch i.e., Leukoderma, a skin disease. She has seen many people with Leukoderma and their lives. So she prays to god "to save her from this ordeal". Anupama's emotional condition has worsened as the days have passed and she is utterly despondent. She is upset with this and even afraid to inform Anand about her condition and worries about the consequences if the disease has not been cured. She has not found any improvement even after following the instructions of the doctor. Her agony starts with the ill-treatment by her mother-in-law.

Her position at in-laws' house has deteriorated. She faces an unconcealed animosity from her in-law which sets her journey to her parents' house. Even after seeing the hard efforts of Anupama, her stepmother objected to her staying with them by saying that it would keep her daughter's life at stake. Adding oil to the fuel she came to know that her husband returned from England and not even contacted her. It breaks her spirit and pushing her to the brink of suicide from a ledge. However, an unseen power held her back. "Why should she die for a husband who didn't even care about her?" (p 78). The indomitable spirit in her emerges and

Anupama decides to rebuild her life. She decided to take up a job and lead life. When Sumitra referred to her married life, she simply spoke out: "I want to look ahead rather than be stuck in the past." It shows her great maturity of thought and action.

Anupama who has been suffering as an abandoned one and a burden to her father and stepmother, revamps hope and courage and moves to Mumbai, the big city where no one bothered about her disease. In Mumbai, she has started her career as a clerk by staying with Sumitra. Hari Sumitra's husband, who was astonished by Anupama's beauty, called Anupama sister but waited to molest her. One day he fell on her and asked to satisfy him with her beauty. Anu who is stunned with the behaviour of Hari has left Sumitra's house, come out and started her career as a Sanskrit lecturer at Vile Parle by taking care of cultural events of a college. This time she stayed in her colleague Dolly's house. She has met a doctor, Dr Vasant, who is very friendly and humane. Dr. Vasant proposed to her by asking her to be a part of his life and also said that he was attracted towards her inner qualities rather than her physical beauty. Anupama, who faced turmoil in her life, answered that she doesn't want a family of her own. and informed him to continue their relationship as good friends.

With strong inclination she has grown as a confident and self-assured woman. She has decided with strong determination to rebuild her life against all odds and finds respect and success in a

world marred by illusions and betrayals. After many years, when her deserted husband meets after a programme and expresses his confession and invites her into his life, she asks him to introspect about his words at marriage and his nature when she has a problem. She shrewdly discards him and exclaims that she is not a beautiful object but a human being with enormous strength that has been given by god.

The incidents in the life of Anupama are projected very clearly by Sudha Murthy. Through the life of Anupama, the writer focuses on how a person like Anupama can be raised at every stringent situation that causes pain in her like Anand's decision to stay abroad, in-law's harsh words, a white patch, abandonment by the family members etc., finally sprinkles courage on her to gather her composedness to live her life independently after undergone the social stigma. All the fatal incidents that had happened in her life made her rise like a meteor and stood as an exemplifier to the victimized and the stigmatized groups.

Conclusion

Sudha Murthy's novel **Mahaswetha** propels the societal dogmas and social taboo towards the Leukoderma or Vitiligo patients in the traditional rural societies and how to face that challenges with courage and confidence. The people who are suffering from this disease have tremendous psycho-social implications. She moulds the character Anupama from a person who experienced pain and stress everyday in the in-law's house and even in the parent's house as a Vitiligo patient to a person who

emerged as a person who can face the critical situations admirably. . This novel may sprinkles a ray of hope in the minds of people who are victimized for certain societal stigmas. The victimized people may realize that inner beauty is more important than physical beauty. It is shown that Anupama's husband who initially deserted her came back to her after watching a play performed by Anupama at the end.

Sudha Murthy's style of writing was very comfortable and Indian. Her works have received wide recognition with intellectual insights. It seemed as if she was talking to the reader face to face.

Anupama's transformation from a suffering lady to a person who decides to take up her life with valor, faith and compassion is depicted by Sudha Murthy skillfully. Her writings are touchy and inspire the people who are in depression and hit the conscience of people who abandon their loved ones by giving priority to external beauty. The novel received much appreciation and acclaim. Sudha Murthy is one of the navigators to mediate the social problems that are faced by women.

References:

Sudha Murthy. Mahashweta. Penguin Books, India, 2007

How to cite this article?

Dr. M. Revathi " Sudha Murthy's Mahashweta – A Sprinkler of Confidence to the Victimized ", Research Journal Of English(RJOE)7 (2), PP: 139-143, 2022, DOI: <http://doi.org/10.36993/RJOE.2022.7.2.18>