
Human Relationships in Sudha Murty's Dollar Bahu

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Abstract

Human relations are the essence of life. They are the sole foundation for our existence and survival. Despite remarkable development in the 21st century, these relationships are degrading. The novels of Sudha Murty are replenished with the essence of human relationships. The theme of love and human connection is recurring in many of her writings. Her stories show how materialism, the currents, and crosscurrents of life impact relationships. The vignettes in Sudha Murty's books depict moral values; during conflicts and challenges in life, these narratives reinstate values according to the changing socio-culture. In her writings, Sudha Murty deals with the problems faced by women in the corporate world. Dollar Bahu is a story of how money spoils the way people look at one another and how it can almost split a family apart. The story is simple but has a realistic effect of how value for money than relations affects a family and how it can have repercussions on relationships. The novel Dollar Bahu shows the diplomatic relations in families. Life starts in a family and also ends in a family. The journey connects human and financial relations.

Keywords: materialism, human relations, moral values

Introduction

The female characters of Murty, amid the crowd, seem to be struggling to find a meaningful relationship with the world and themselves, and Murty uses various devices like irony, symbolism, and traditional values in the Indian context to illustrate the theme of relationships and to depict the characters' struggle to achieving togetherness. From the cradle to the grave, human beings live within various kinds of kinships because of the desire to belong to some group more significant than oneself, to be accepted, and to be a part of something important. The kinship bonds, particularly the parent-child and husband-wife relationship play a vital role in personality formation as it provides one with a sense of belongingness, camaraderie, and safety. Murty, in her novels, probes the seclusion and alienation an individual experiences as a result of any loss or submergence of love and communication between family relationships. This alienation makes the

character's quest for one's identity and acquires a stage of maturity and equability.

As one of the leading and successful women writers of the contemporary modern era, her works are a lifelike representation of the socio-psychological and cultural issues faced by stylish Indian women. Simply, she has analyzed the substantial current issues in her novels. She has dived deep into the workings of the inner mind of the women characters in her works. The main protagonists are portrayed as well-educated women with latent talent and power who are ready to face the challenges under any circumstances and emerge as successful people by carving a niche for themselves in the society within the parameter of the traditional Indian culture.

Originally written in Kannada, Dollar Bahu is a story of how money spoils the way people look at one another and how it can almost split a family apart. The story is simple but has a realistic effect of how value for money than relations affects a family and how it can have repercussions on relationships. The novel Dollar Bahu shows the diplomatic relations in families. Life starts in a family and also ends in a family. The journey connects human and financial ties. It is unlucky that current-day relations are more economical than humans. Dollar Bahu is a satire on ignorant people fascinated by Western culture and money-mindedness.

HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS IN DOLLAR BAHU

Dollar Bahu explains how money can wreak havoc in the life of any family if things spin out of control. Vinita, an exquisite singer, meets Chandra Sekhar, an employee from Bangalore deputed to look after the work at Dharwad on a train. Chandru has apprehensions about the new place and is helped by his brother Girish's friend. With his support, he finds his stay as a paying guest in Vinita's house. As a music lover, he enjoys Vinita's songs. He falls in love with her but never expresses it to her. Vinita took care of him when he had a fracture in his leg. She lives with her uncle and loves caring for the house and the garden her parents had left her.

Chandru is brought up in a lower middle-class family who stays in Jayanagar in Bangalore. His father Shamanna was a school teacher; mother Gouramma, an intelligent housewife; Girish, a simple-minded brother; and an ambitious sister Surabhi. He completed his graduation in engineering and joined a local construction company, and his hard work gave him sporting chances. He was sent to the dreamland of America from Dharwad. Grammar was a good lady but was crazy for money and wealth. She impacted the neighboring women, who were as ignorant as she was not allowing Indian children mothers to participate in the conversation of American children mothers. She wanted to be like them. Chandru's departure to the fairyland

sows seeds of greediness in her. Chandru worked hard in the land of opportunities living economically, and learned computer courses after the day's work for which his company paid. Gramma had built a stair, bringing about many modern changes in her life, not worrying about missing her son. Chandru was equally fascinated by the beautiful land and resumed his stay secretly by not informing his former employers.

Chandru was not sure about getting his green card, so he told it would not be suitable for his parents to postpone Girish's marriage. Girish, working in a bank, met Vinutain on a bus. After her uncle's death, she came from Dharwad and stayed in her aunt's house, working in a school. Girish knew she was working in the same school where his father worked. His generous father understood his son's love and arranged the alliance between Girish and Vinita. Vinita starts to get accustomed to her new family. She gets used to this recent change and spends her life looking after her in-laws and her husband. She even tries her level best to ignore the taunts of her mother-in-law, Gouramma. Chandru had written a letter expressing his feelings to Vinita after settling in America, but it was returned as Vinuta was not staying there. It's the destiny that is not in the hands of human beings; both brothers liked her, but the brother who was not as good as the elder one could win the golden-voiced girl. Chandru struggled in Nashville to get a green card and returned to his homeland after six years. As

eminent personalities say, looking at something from afar deceives one's eyes, but looking closely reveals the ultimate truth. Chandru was happy that he could satisfy his mother, but his inner feelings were, in one way, buried. He was ready to marry Jamuna, a girl from a wealthy family whom his mother had chosen for him. He says,

“Well, I plan to settle there. But one should be aware that life in America is lonely, as against life in India” (DB 49).

The elder daughter-in-law's entrance and wealth made Gouramma forget life's realities. She was captivated by the dollar bahu and started humiliating Vinita. She was the one who served her in-laws but was never rewarded. Naturally, for a mother, all her children are equal irrespective of their financial status, but Gouramma had forgotten the simple issue by showing differences between her daughters-in-law. As human beings, do we need to be reminded of such things by other family members? Yes, it was confirmed in the case of Gouramma. Shamanna, the head of the family, working as a Sanskrit teacher, is a contended man leading a simple life. Gowamma, the wife of Shamanna, is attracted to Dollar.

Contrary to her husband, she always enjoys life in a dreamy world which represents the fascination for great materialistic pleasures ignoring peaceful human relations. She develops hatred and

aversion towards her daughter-in-law Vinita, a humble good looking graduate and a teacher from a middle-class family who is married to her younger son Girish. Vinita must listen to the constant comparisons made between her and Chandru's wife, the 'Dollar Bahu,' whose husband earns the valuable dollars that have brought the family its recent affluence. Vinita slowly loses her peace of mind and health.

The novel ends with a change in the mentality of Gouramma through which she comes to know that India is better than the US through her multi-cultural experiences and Indian bahu's living in India are better than the practical life of the Indian bahu settled in the US. The novel has a dramatic narrative style in which the reader can deduce possible conclusions because the author provides numerous hints about what will happen next in the narration.

Dollar Bahu depicts the prevailing Indian context where the daughter-in-law is often neglected and is treated as a sacrificial goat. A reflection of typical Indian sensibilities, conceptions, misconceptions, and the utter desolation and bitterness linked up with invisible chains of patriarchal pressure and other family responsibilities existing in every nook and corner are interspersed throughout the novel.

The author beautifully portrays the complexity of human relationships

and the miserable plight of women suffering in the contemporary society, which subjects women to face a silent crisis when they lack mutual bonding and trust in their lives: lack of identity, loveless marital life, women limited to her conventional roles, treatment of women as a non-entity under the patriarchal structure. The writer attempts to present a woman seeking liberation in terms of individual choices and outside her realms of marriage. She suggests that a balance between the conventional pre-set role of women and the contemporary issues must be struck. Traditional roles often limit women, and their impact is not conducive to attaining self-status. They are a part of womanhood that does not bring fulfillment to women's life. Women, by rethinking their unsatisfactory roles imposed on them by the patriarchal society, do not attain fulfillment.

The character of Vinita clearly shows that family is made up of good human relations but not money. It espouses her philosophical views on charity, hospitality, and self-realization. Murty has a lucid and narrative way of writing.

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