

**Delineation Of Domestic Constrain In Sudha Muruthy's
Mahashweta**

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Abstract

Anupama, the powerful protagonist of the novel Mahashweta by Sudha Murthy symbolizes how a woman in the society is being treated by men. It explores the needs of the development and humanistic approach in the society. This paper focuses on how a woman is treated well by men when she is physically attractive and the same woman is treated worse when she is physically affective and it also includes how the internal qualities of women in the society is being crushed and smothered however it is. The novel picturizes on how the money plays a vital role in the society. It also marks how financial and economic status of a person makes him to grow and destroy under the single roof. At this point, the paper reminds the human values, kindness, friendship, etc. which is forgotten in today's society and also describes about the excess of believe and reverence to the supernatural which overrule the humanity.

Key Words: Society, Tradition, Gender, Domestic, Discrimination.

Society is the place where different group of individuals is brought under one roof of geographical or social territory. Since it is from different groups, there exist a discrimination in the name of caste, color, wealth, gender, etc. Sudha Murthy, a prolific contemporary Indian writer who focuses on those stigmas and reflects in her literary outcomes. Generally her novels pay more attention to courage, emancipation, social status and family relationship than money

and tradition. Her works mostly concentrates on the spiritual love rather than physical love. It is always the inner beauty that can make the relationship stronger. *Mahashweta* is one of the remarkable works of Sudha Murthy which picturizes the social stigma that is prevailing in the society, the sufferings of women in the name of tradition and the progress of women to emancipate from those conventions. It is also portrayed the dependency and the struggle to survive independently.

Anupama, the protagonist of the novel *Mahashweta* is suffered with Leukoderma and so she is marginalized by her own husband and by the society where she lives. This makes her to feel depressed and isolated. Though she has many skills and dreams, everything get scattered by the disease and the reaction of the society to the disease. Her works focus on the socio-economic and the psychological issues faced by women in the society. Family is the place where all the individual would depend on each other and love each other. From the pre-independent period, it is woman who should depend on her father, before marriage and on her husband and son after marriage. After independence, the position of women have increased in many fields. But when it keenly observed women are still domestically dependent and deplorable.

Tradition is one of the major issues in many streams of the society. In *Mahashweta*, Anand, the male lead role wants his wife to be physically attractive. He does not care about the inner quality. Because, the physical portrayal of his partner makes him feel satisfied. On the other hand, Radhakka, Anand's mother wants her daughter-in-law from the rich background. As a result the status of their family could be raised in their circle of community. Though Anupama is not rich in background, her exquisite complexion makes Anand to fall in love on her. Radhakka agree reluctantly for the marriage. When everything is

going well after the marriage there comes the disaster in the form of leukoderma. The entire family which gets struck by Anupama's external beauty, starts isolated for the white patches on the skin. They considered the white patches are the result of sins from the previous birth. This can be seen clearly in the words of Narayana, the family priest,

"Don't come here and pollute everything." (Mahashweta, 54)

Anand, even being a doctor does not realize the factors of the disease. He knows very well that the disease is not hereditary and contagious as well. But still, he refuses the innocent Anupama and not even consoles her. Because the white patches on her would spoil his reputation in the society. On her other hand Radhakka, who give importance to money and status, also deports Anupama out of the house. Though being women, she does not care about the life of another woman. The entire family and neighbors stand against Anupama for being affected by disease. When Anupama goes back to her father's home, her step-mother Sabakka believes that the disease is a bad luck of the family. Though she is compassionate on any other children, she always refuses Anupama. Because her external beauty makes her own daughters to be less attractive. It is the curse of the Indian society to follow all such customs without questioning. Though the people are being civilized in many fields, they are standing beyond the point in many areas in the name of customs. Though the customs make the society conventional, it deplores the women in many ways.

Society which holds all the stigma in the name of the custom. Those negative believes from the custom make the marginalized to get suffer. In *Mahashweta*, Anupama is the one who cares more for her education. Though her family is economically poor, she strives hard for education. But her family decides that she should not continue her studies further. Because, over

qualification would make them difficult to find the groom for her. This shows the restrictions that lay on women in the society. When the man in the family is given liberation to study as on his wish, the woman is not treated the same. Such stigma in the society is a huge barrier for women to grow.

But, the character Anupama in the novel is very intellectual and also a caring person on others. She gives importance to the feeling of others. She is a character who obeys the words of her father and wishes not to be a burden for him. Though she wants to continue her higher studies, she does not want to be a load for her family for the well-being of others, she sacrifices her own desire and marries Anand whole-heartedly. She not even wants her audience to get upset with the tragic endings in the play. So, she always prefers to act in the play with happy ending which makes the audience to feel delight and ease.

“I do not want to play the tragic heroine, Sumi. I want to show the audience the joy, the happiness, the magic transformation that love and beauty can bring I believe in happy endings!” (Mahashweta, 70)

Though she is compassionate and caring towards her audience, her own fate is cruel on her. It plays treachery on her in the name of leukoderma. Even her husband Anand avoids her when she needs him. Being a doctor, he knows more about the disease. When his patients are affected by such disease, he cares on them and gives proper consultation and treatment. But, when it comes to wife, he did not even reply for her letters. He is never there when she needs. He did not think what would happen if his mother Radhakka, his sister Girija or even himself is diseased. He thinks if he takes Anupama to London with him, it would spoil his name in the friend circle to have a diseased partner. He refuses to know about the progress of the disease and

the scenario of his wife's status. Meanwhile Radhakka searches for another bride for his son without concerning the future of Anupama.

The above words of Radhakka clearly shows that a girl from poor economical background can be rejected at any cause for any reason. That too when there is no strong hand in the family, it is very easy to sort out her from the boundary. Where does the marriage ethical vows go here? Being a woman, she does not care about the life of another woman. It is all about the money that the society respect or disrespect you. This society would not give any space for the inner quality of the person. Radhakka does not want her daughter to get married into a poor family. When it happens, it spoils her dignity in the society. She knows very well that her daughter Girija is not pure in her physical morality, but still she does not care about the ethics in her case. Though her daughter loses virginity with her boyfriend, she makes her to marry another person who is economically rich. But when Anu is loyal to her husband and the family, she is treated as a kind of toy in the hands of Radhakka, which she crushes and smothers.

Love is not commodity that can buy from the market. It is kind of sharing joys and sorrows with each other. But that love is being evaluated by the physical and economical background of the person. When money comes, the quality of being affectionate is expired. When it comes to gender, again the love is being discriminated. When Anand tells about his attraction towards Anupama to his mother, she immediately consults their family priest about the horoscopes. After the horoscopes matches perfect with the result of male children, she accepts the marriage reluctantly. This shows the foolish stigma in the society which accepts a woman for giving birth to male children. She did not realize that she is a woman and she might not be born if her parents think in the same way. Through the character Radhakka, Sudha Murthy clearly shows the

picture of the society which deport the female children and the injustice against them. When the family find out the white patches in Anupama, they behave very rude than beasts.

“This is a bad disease. She cannot perform ant puja now. It must be the result of a sin from her previous life”(Mahashweta, 54)

The above lines from the novel clearly portrays how a woman is considered as a bad omen when she is physically affective and as a good omen when she is physically attractive. The family that enjoys and glorifies on the beauty and the stars, rejects on the white patches. The person who is diseased is considered to be an untouchable and should be in exile that too, if the person is from low financial background, they treat the person as a dead object with no emotions. No one in the family is ready to take care of Anupama. They do not allow her to have food with them. The innocent Anupama is helpless and unsafe. No one is ready to accept her in her husband's family and in her father's family as well. She is left all alone with her innocent heart and white patches. Even her father, Shamanna who is the only person in the world to take care of her after her mother's death, refuses her stay in his home.

On the other hand, Anand did not even make a call to console her. He refuses to be there, when she needs him. He loves only her beauty and not ready to accept her when it gets spoil. He uses her beauty only to be the index of his pride and being a doctor he knows very well that the disease is not hereditary and contagious but still he rejects her for the sake of his reputation. The domestic circle which she believes refuses to give the hand when she needs. How will an individual survive, when he/she is blocked even by the family? Just because Anupama's white patches, Radhakka plans for second marriage for his son. She also pretends that she is very kind hearted and more concern on Anupama. Through the character Radhakka, the writer clearly

portrays how the people uses different masks to show off themselves in different situations. The writer clearly portrays the difference between the classical love and the modern love. The classical love which blossomed out of inner beauty whereas the modern love is from the illusion of physical beauty.

The novel *Mahashweta* offers the hope and solace to the victims of the prejudice that prevail in our society. Anupama, the protagonist, who is uncared by her in laws and insensitive husband, marked as an optimistic point for the empowerment of women. Women, like men, have all the emotions and feelings, likes and dislikes, desires and expectations, etc. But, everything got crushed and smothered in the society in the name of stigma. Unlike many women in the society, Anupama does not want to stay behind the walls and worry about her fate. Sudha Murthy picturizes clearly about the struggles of women in the society in the forms of domestic violence, social stigma and tradition.

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