



Fragile Marital Relationship Sudha Murthy's 'Mahashweta', 'Gently Falls The Bakulla', and 'House Of Cards'

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ABSTRACT

This paper critically examines the fragile and weakens marital relationship of Sudha Murthy's character. Sudha Murthy is a contemporary female novelist. She is a technocrat with most innovative and skillful writing. Sudha Murthy projects the images of modern Indian woman who is protagonist and career oriented woman. But in patriarchal society woman are dominated by male. Women suppress their dreams and desire for family but when she is ignored by her husband their marital relation becomes fragile. The present illustrates how the insulted, rejected, ignored woman tries to break the marital relation and left their husband to live happy and free life. Sudha Murthy has presented such a fragile marital relationship in her three novels 'Mahashweta', 'Gently Falls the Bakula' and 'House of Cards'. Sudha Murthy presents good relation between husband and wife but it is destroyed by whimsical, hypocritical and selfish behavior of males. False appearance of male character has spoil the trust in marriage. Trust is a very necessary for any relationship.

Keywords: marriage, patriarchal society, family, relationship, trust

I. INTRODUCTION

Sudha Murthy is a contemporary female novelist. She is a technocrat and wife of Narayan Murthy. She has performed the many role as chairperson of Infosys, a teacher and a philanthropist. She has deep insight into the emotion of people whom she meets every day. Her writing is based on reality and it touches the heart of the readers. Simplicity in language and clear expression of idea bring special features in Murthy's works. She is well-known writer in English and Kannada. Her works depict Karnataka's rural life. Sudha Murthy projects her woman protagonist as an educated woman and they rebel against the male domination and choose their own path to live free life. The Works of modern Indian writers like Anita Desai, Ruth Prawar Jahabwala, Mahashweta Devi, Shashi Deshpande, Nayantara Sahagal, Shobha De, Jhumpa Lahiri, Arundhati Roy and Sudha Murthy has made us to think in woman's point of view, woman's psychology, and their aspirations.

Among them all Sudha Murthy works is heart touching and deals with middle to lower class individuals. Sudha Murthy has written many novels and short stories like Dollar Bahu, House of Cards, Mahashweta, The Bird with Golden Wings, Wise and Otherwise: A Salute to Life, The Old Man and His God, The Day I Stopped Drinking Milk, A Wedding in Russia, The Accolades Galore, Changing India, Sweet Hospitality and Gently Falls the Bakula. Among these novels Mahashweta, Gently Falls the Bakula and House of Cards is focus on the male domination, subordination of woman, untrustworthy male and rebel of the woman in such a unsatisfied married life.

II. DISCUSSION

The aim of this paper is to bring out the fragile marital relationship in Sudha Murthy's selected novels Mahashweta, Gently Falls the Bakula and House of Cards. Sudha Murthy describes selfishness and greediness of the characters mostly males. She shows how male character changes their attitude when they have more money and position. They behave differently

even with their wife. Due to ignorance, insults the marital relation of husband and wife shatters.

Fragile Marital Relation of Dr. Anand and Anupama in 'Mahashweta':

The select novel Mahashweta is one of the best works of Sudha Murthy. The novel focuses on women's struggle, pain, anguish, sorrows, conflicts as well as how the protagonist comes out from pessimistic condition to strong woman. But in this process of the transformation of the protagonist the marital relation becomes fragile.

Sudha Murthy presents the story of Anupama, the protagonist of the novel. She is a beautiful, intelligent, a classical singer and actor in drama. Anupama as per her name means none can compare with her. The intelligent and well established Dr. Anand attracted towards Anupama by her simplicity and striking beauty.

Anupama is also attracted Dr. Anand's tall, fair, and good looking. But Anupama knew her poor condition. She couldn't even dream about Anand. Here Anand is madly in love with Anupama. His mother has given permission for marriage. For Anupama, it was dream come true. But her happiness was short lived because she discovered that she has leukoderma which is still treated as a bad omen.

Before the marriage Anupama's life was very simple but free of any kind of worries. She was an active in social work. She used to help poor and needy by collecting donation, selling tickets. Educated Anupama wanted to support her father but she couldn't. But after her marriage her life became more critical due dominating mother in law and arrogant sister in law. Her real problem started from the day she discovered white patch on her leg and it was leukoderma from the dermatologist. She lost all her freedom. Radhakka, a mother of Anand treated Anupama like untouchable and sent her to her father's house.

Anupama was blamed for hiding the disease and marrying with Dr. Anand. He was the only person who knows the truth. A doctor by profession knows the internal emotional feeling of the patient. As a husband he has to understand his wife but he just believed what his mother said ignoring the reality. Anupama wrote many letters to Dr. Anand when he was in England but he didn't reply. Dr. Anand failed to understand inner beauty of

Anupama and made her life more depressed, humiliated and critical. When Dr. Anand came towards Anupama after many years to bring her at his house, Anupama reacts sharply,

"A marriage is a lifelong commitment, for better or for worse, till death do us part. Wasn't that what you have said to me before you left for England?"
(Mahashweta, p.147)

Now, Anupama is not ready to forgive her husband as well as she is not going to marry with another one. Anupama devoted her mind, body and soul to Dr. Anand. She loved him very much but in return Dr. Anand hurts her deeply. Due to the ignorance, insult, humiliation and ill treatment of her in laws family as well as her husband's ignorance the marital relation between husband and wife becomes fragile.

Fragile Marital Relationship of Shrimati and Shrikant in 'Gently Falls the Bakula':

'Gently Falls the Bakula' is Sudha Murthy's first novel, written in Kannada and translated into English. The title of the novel is symbolical. The love between husband and wife is shown by bakula flowers but shedding of the flowers indicating love between Shrikant and Shrimati is also falling and they are departing from each other, their marital relation not remained healthy.

The protagonist, Shrimati falls in love with her neighbor Shrikant. Both of them were classmates. Just to get married to Shrikant she turns down a research scholarship and sacrifices her career. Shrikant joins an IT company and becomes a corporates. He reaches the pick point of his career. While Shrimati gives up her further education for domestic duties or she would consider her husband's success it means her own. She was ill treated by her mother in law, just because her ordinary looks, without dowry and only ten months younger to her son. Shrimati's mother in law referred her as a barren woman. Shrimati's nervousness is not only from her in laws family but also from her husband. Shrikant becomes a popular and busy person in his field. He has a secretary in the office but at home he required someone. This need is fulfilled by Shrimati, at first she considers it's her duty but her schedule become routine.

Now she gets lesser time with her husband but has to play hostess role to his official and personal friend,

which she isn't comfortable. Shrikant treated her as a secretary not as his better half. Her heart didn't want to accept that Shrikant didn't care her. Shrimati demanded Shrikant to spend some time with her. But the workaholic man chided her and disagreed. Shrimati reacted,

“You have an obligation to your wife. If you do not fulfill it, I will not stay in this house”
(Gently Falls the Bakula p. no. 142)

Shrimati tells him that he cannot put-up with loneliness any longer; nor can she live with artificial values which lingers with materialistic success. Shrimati decided to write a letter to Professor Collins at US for pursuing PhD in History. She got positive response from US. Now she felt life has opened a new door for her. Pleasure is more valuable than money. She went not to earn money but to find her own individuality, her own self-identity and to live happy and free life.

Fragile Marital Relationship between Mridula and Sanjay in 'House of Cards':

Murthy depicts relationship of husband and wife in this novel. When the trust not remain the relationship also shatters. House of Cards is the story of Mridula and Sanjay's marital relationship. Mridula is a teacher and Sanjay was working in government hospital. Afterwards Sanjay has completed his P.G. IN Gynecology by the help of Mridula. Then he started his private hospital with the guidance of Alex. But money has changed the attitude and thoughts of Sanjay. He had sent money to his mother but he told to Mridula that he had not sent it. Sanjay had gifted a car to his nephew but he told its company's car.

Anil, a nephew of Sanjay had gifted gold to Laxmi through numerous cheques around fifty lakhs a year.

When Mridula comes to know the fact she felt he is dishonest, untrustworthy and dubious person. Mridula lost all her confidence and didn't believe that her husband Sanjay had cheated her. Mridula saved and maintained the money for his PG and his clinic. She lives with complete belief. The trust between Mridula and Sanjay was shattered. Therefore Mridula shifted her bag to the guest room and locked the door from inside. When her friend Anita came to know about situation. Mridula explains

“Anita, it is not about money. Money can be earned and lost. It is about faith that a wife has in her husband. That's more valuable than money and gold. Faith sustains a marriage and brings joy to the family. Without it we have nothing. How can Sanjay destroy the faith and trust I had in him?”

(House of Cards p. no. 186)

Mridula thinks that she is deceived by her own companion. She thinks that she is trapped in marriage and defrauded by her husband. She became depressed and left Dr. Sanjay's house. She has her job as school headmistress in Hubali.

Success of marriage depends on the effective working together of both husband and wife and trust is requirement for any relationship. Here dishonest behavior of Sanjay their relation becomes fragile.

III. CONCLUSION

Sudha Murthy points out the marital relationship is depend upon trust. In her novels, it is find that male characters are untrustworthy, selfish, dominated, take women for granted. In all these three novels women protagonist are insulted, are the medium of dowry (money), women are humiliated.

Woman can accept anything but not ready to accept disbelief and ignorance of her husband, therefore this paper suggests that woman should be given equal rights and opportunity. Woman should not be dominated by patriarchal society. Women's have their own dream and have freedom to live happy life. Here, Anupama leaves her husband due to Anand's ignorance about her. Shrimati leaves Shrikant to join PhD course to live free life due to subordinate treatment and ignorance. Mridula leaves her husband Sanjay because of his untrustworthy nature.

It is right of every woman to live her own life. There should no obligation for woman to live with their dishonest husband and live a life as a puppet and suffer forever. There should be freedom for women how to live their life. In Sudha Murthy's novels divorce is not occurred because divorce is a medium of re- marriage. But in her novels marital relation remains fragile.

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