



## Feminism in Sudha Murty's novels

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**Abstract:** *Through her work, Sudha Murty re-enacts feminism by delving deeply into the emotional and psychological realities of her female characters, with whom she constantly engages. Her novels address topics such as women's patriarchal oppression in specifically, as well as concerns of women's oppression generally and guilt over masculinity and femininity. The majority of Sudha Murty's female protagonists go through a transitional phase that establishes them as individuals in their pursuit of identity; who encounter endless obstacles before completing their mission or succumbing to life's vagaries. In order to focus on how gender discrimination, marital problems, and female identity blur in these fictional female characters, Sudha Murty's many depictions of middle-class women and their domestic worries are analyzed. She protests against issues relating to women's positions within families and their rights to equality compared to men in various spheres of social life. Sudha Murty elevates the woman to a cult figure, battling traditional taboos, societal and joint family limitations, and various other constraints imposed by patriarchy.*

*It is a critical analysis of the characters' aspirations for recognition of their worth and value as economically independent individuals in a society ruled by males. The formation of their social identity as a means of self-fulfillment is studied, as is their resistance to dominant relationships and battles for social acceptance. This paper aims to free women from the accountability demands made of them, frequently without their knowledge. In a patriarchal society, women are shown by Sudha Murty as having a unique identity. The purpose of this paper is to investigate how Sudha Murty's writings were influenced by feminism.*

**Key Words:** *Equality, Female, Femininity, Women, Social life.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION:

The goal of the social movement known as feminism is to provide women in society equal rights and opportunities. Feminism is the practice of considering women as human beings with issues, aspirations, and needs. Regardless of gender, religion, sexual orientation, race, or other similarly predominating distinguishing characteristics, feminism holds that all people should be treated equally in legal, economic, and social contexts. A sociopolitical movement known as feminism encourages women to take an active role in fighting for their rights. It is a movement that fights patriarchal oppression of women. English literature in India was also affected by feminist beliefs. Women's writing was regarded as an effective platform for modernism and feminist views in the 20th century.

The majority of feminist novels explore the psychological struggles of resentful housewives and the oppressed lifestyles of lower-class women. They show how modern women have come to understand that they are independent and not helpless. They consider women to be on par with men. Female subjectivity is examined by Indian women writers, who apply themes ranging from childhood to womanhood. Through their works, they explain what feminism is in reality. Feminism, according to these female writers, entails ending all of the silent pain experienced by women.

The feminists in India were influenced by the 1960s women's movement. Sudha Murthy, one of the few feminists in India, is a social worker who also writes frequently in both Kannada and English. Murthy started out as a computer scientist and engineer. She is the chairperson of the Infosys Foundation. Her various novels have been published primarily by Penguin and have been translated into 15 languages, including Hindi and Marathi.



Sudha Murthy's novels reflect the characteristics of feminism. They do not directly challenge the patriarchal culture, but they do so indirectly through her diverse characters in her writings. Her heroines are from middle-class backgrounds. They are bright, obedient, and subservient.

## **2. Gentle Falls The Bakula:**

In this novel the chief characters Shrimathi and Srikanth are from the same school in a little North Karnataka town in Hubli. They are exceptionally competitive. Continuously Shrimati wins the goodwill of her instructors. She gets appreciation from her companions and the teachers. Even Shrikant knows well that she could be a great competitor to him. But oddly, he falls in love with her and she too reciprocates. They get married. After her marriage, she limits herself to a little world. She fails to put her career in track.

She renounces her time, education and opportunity of taking choices to fulfill her husband's purpose. She kills her desires and becomes an uncomplaining shadow to her spouse. She engages herself in serving and holding up for her husband's return from his business. On the other side, her husband Shrikant creates his specialized aptitudes and quickly climbs the corporate ladder. As he builds up his own industry, he overlooks the commitment his wife has made for his growth.

Women's lives are closer to the blossom of the Bakula tree. The Bakula tree lives for 100 years. The fascination of the minor, pale greenish tree is its blossoms with a divine smell. Indeed, the flowers shed a gentle scent as they dry and turn brown. The flowers attach a carpet to the ground beneath it when that tree is in bloom. Women's lives are similar to those of Bakula blossoms. The intelligent and talented women give up their career to satisfy the expectations and aspirations of their family members. They stand like pillars to support the roof of the house. To see their husbands victorious, they lose their joy at work, family and in every sphere of their life. They burn themselves out like a candle, spreading light to her family.

## **3. House of Cards:**

The novel 'House of cards' addresses familial relationships in which married women are involved and the vital equilibrium needed to keep the relationships healthy. The House of Cards merely touches upon the whimsical and hypocritical chauvinistic attitude of men. The protagonist of this novel Mridhula has a brittle marriage that is easily destroyed by her cheating, treacherous husband.

The couple's peace in their married life depends on the attitudes of the male partner. All people are not good at heart; some are liars and some are self-centered. Mridhula gives her husband complete love in all situations and accompanies him on the difficult road to achievement. But her husband Sanjay is an obnoxious intruder who has caused emotional harm to her. Sanjay never expresses his actual feelings for Mridhula. He is her boss, he has a big ego from success, and he has never built a strong rapport with her, and in the long run reveals his detestable infidelity. On the other side, Mridhula personally backs him to fulfill his life's greatest achievement.

The protagonist perceives her husband's profound disloyalty in monetary matters. Perhaps her husband maintains his trickery well and feels inclined to his sister's and mother's self-centeredness. Because of his questionable demeanor she feels that it is smarter to be blissfully distant from everyone else than to be with somebody who causes her to feel mediocre, unfortunate and inadequate.

Without illuminating the marital life of his his better half Sanjay gives cash to his mother, buys a vehicle for his nephew Anil and opens a joined account with his sister Lakshmi. Gaining all his accomplishments with the assistance of his wife, he cheats and overwhelms her through his questionable nature. Later Mridhula ponders over her deplorable condition that has not allowed her to put something aside for their future. Subsequently her husband regrets his neglect and runs after her with a ray of hope to bring her back.

Mridhula battles with reason and feeling. Women's struggles occur because of the discrimination over qualities, and the cultural and psychological climate in which they grow up. The instilled values, the various societies and different monetary status of their families make her endure all miseries at her significant other's hand. The more the cash individuals get, the more selfish they become and the outcome is a shameless and disastrous betrayal of their near ones.



Inhumanity, the thirst for control and power obliterate a conjugal relationship and the house constructed meagerly falls terrifyingly.

This paper suggests that women ought to acquire equivalent privileges and they ought not to be ruled, subjected or cheated by male controlled society or their spouses. They ought to enjoy the same rights as their husbands. Females should likewise enhance their awareness and should not get fooled by anybody. It is smarter to be straightforward with one's spouse about the monetary state at every turn. One should not break the trust of one's spouse; once the trust is broken, one cannot expect to live respectively any more. The house built of cards can collapse easily. Owing to the irregularity in conduct and clandestine mentality of Sanjay marriage, a social sacrosanct foundation for a happy conjugal life, is drained of its sacredness.

Most likely, Sudha Murty discusses the genuine encounters of her life and presents female characters to show their griefs, yearnings and sufferings in this fraudulent world, where there is gender discrimination in managing financial matters in families. The sad state of affairs is presented in contrast to the pomposity, apathy, and voracity of the male-centric world.

#### **4. Mahashweta:**

In this novel Sudha Murthy depicts a woman's struggles from disappointments to self-fulfillments. Anupama, the desolate protagonist in Mahashweta, is a sensitive, energetic, passionate and sensuous character. She attempts to work out some kind of harmony between the needs of the institution of marriage and her own scholarly desires. She is profoundly bedazzled when she comes face to face with the absurd life brought before her. Anupama is cheerfully married to Dr. Anand but her fantasy marriage goes to pieces when she finds a few white patches on her foot and discovers that she has leukoderma. Deserted by her relentless in-laws and heartless husband she is compelled to get back to her father's home in the village. At the point when Dr. Anand goes to Britain for higher studies, she encounters prolonged loneliness and a distressing absence of communication.

The whole novel deals with two different mentalities of women – Anupama, Dolly, Sumitra are sensible, cherishing, loving and understanding; Anupama's step-mother, mother-in-law, Girija are conceited. Anupama's stay with Sumithra, her college roommate who lovingly invites her in spite of her friend's white patches, is a standing testimony of the strong bonds of love and friendship among women who have developed positive virtues in their lives.

Sudha Murty demonstrates the shift in society's mentality. Anupama temporarily takes up a clerical work (however she is over qualified for this work) which gives her confidence. There she meets Dolly who becomes her best friend and she moves to remain with her. In the meantime, Dolly meets with an accident, and Anupama's blood donation to her hints that leukoderma is not a barrier to blood donation. This incident serves as a second eye-opener for the audience.

On Dolly's suggestion Anupama takes up the job of Lecturer in Sanskrit in a College. Furthermore, she's more anxious to nurture the histrionics of her pupils as well. Dolly, on the other hand, gets married and moves to Australia, leaving Anupama to take care of her house free of rent.

Anupama meets with an accident and Dr. Vasant treats her. In the mean time Anand understands that he is so fond of beauty that he is willing to marry her. One day in Britain when he comes across a noble husband who soulfully attends to his disabled wife, he is overwhelmed by responsibility. He sets up practice in his sprawling mansion when he returns to India, but he is shocked to learn that his mother knew about his sister Girija's affair but covered it up.

While the society evades Anupama for a patch, Girija is respected! Anand is greatly shaken by this incident. He embarks to track down Anupama. Meanwhile Shamana, Anupama's father has passed away; she sends money for the rituals. The same stepmother who once thought she was a bad omen now writes to her in a sweet way because she needs money. Here, we can see how people change and how money affects some people. After some genuine effort, Anand gets Anupama's contact address and meets her. She makes it clear that their relationship is over in her decision. Her decision itself shows that the long painful sufferings of being a woman, the bitter struggle for the equality of decision-making, come to an end.

The patriarchal society takes their commitment to their family as their obligation yet they ought to likewise understand that it is the obligation of the male to show an equivalent commitment and affection towards the wife and her family.



The domination of the man-centric culture has been there for ages. The character of Shrimati in 'Gently Falls the Bakula', Mirudula in 'House of Cards', Anupama in 'Mahashweta' and numerous different women are having similitudes. Women are such. They are submissive, smart, gentle and known for patience. Once they lose their patience and react, even touching their shadow can strike terror in a man-centred society.

Sudha Murty clearly presents her feminist thoughts in all of her novels. She expresses her thoughts exquisitely in words that are clear and simple – unlike some traditional scholars who astonish the readers with their abstruse language. Her language is surprisingly liberated from trite articulations. She is effectively justifiable and the readers never get bewildered with the words employed in her novels. She revived English and made it a reasonable vehicle for easy comprehension.

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