



# Depiction of Traditionalism and feminist consciousness in Sudha Murthy's Fictional

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**Abstract:** The influence of Indian literature on the evolution of the English language is felt not just in India, but all throughout the world. One possible explanation is the significant impact of Indian novelists, from their forebears to the current crop of authors. The advent of feminist trailblazers in modern literature has worked to offer a platform to the cause of women's equality. Sudha Murthy is a best-selling novelist who writes in both Kannada and English. She has written several publications, both fictional and nonfictional, including novels, manuals, travelogues, anthologies, and essays. Murthy's writings include a large cast of individuals in a wide variety of situations, all of which are authenticated by verifiable evidence from their real-life registries. The article illustrates how urban middle-class women in Sudha Murthy's *Dollar Bahu* battle with their own sense of identity while being firmly entrenched in the ideals of being a lady who holds her family together. The story focuses on female characters and does an excellent job of capturing the range of female experience. The work has a hint of traditionalism, especially in the character of the lady who, in her pursuit of wealth, puts other women on a low esteem. In this study, we analyze *Mahashweta* by Sudha Murthy and how she emerges as a fully independent woman. Modern women are more than capable of realizing their goals. Unlike men, Indian women have more moral and emotional fortitude.

**Keywords:** Feminist, Traditionalism, Consciousness, Fictional

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## INTRODUCTION

Murthy has depicted her characters in accordance with her own experiences. Her husband, Infosys' primary backer, Nagavara Ramarao Narayan Murthy, is a well-known Kannada and English author, philanthropist, and computer whiz. In 2006, Sudha Murthy was awarded the renowned Padma Shri grant for her social work and the R. K. Narayan grant for her academic achievements, in addition to a life time accomplishment prize for her dedication to literature. Both *Mahashweta* and *Gently falls the Bakula*, two of Sudha Murthy's stories, feature strong, independent women. *Mahashweta* describes Anupama's transformation from a gloomy person to a bright one once she overcomes the challenges brought on by her unconventional beliefs. "The *Bakula* depicts the hero, imprisoned in an air of refined coolness, breaking free." It focuses on the challenges women face in the public sphere and how they grow into confident, strong characters who are able to adapt to their changing circumstances. The protagonists in her stories are able to overcome enormous obstacles because they are receptive to Western education and culture.

When the East India Company first arrived in India, English language and literature took off. In the late 1970s, a new crop of privileged authors and writers from Convent and boarding school backgrounds emerged. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and Toru Dutt should not be overlooked because of their early work. Bankim wrote the first Indian book written in English, *Rajmohan's Wife* (1864). In this work, the main character, a woman named Maatangi, is punished for her rebellion against the banality and

meaninglessness of everyday life by having her romanticism ripped away from her. Toru Dutt (1856-1877), a writer who lived just 21 years but left an indelible imprint on the literary world via the honesty of her words, was mostly forgotten during her lifetime. There is a second bias against Indian women who write in English compared to their regional contemporaries. "Both the awareness of woman's position in society as one of disadvantage or in general compared with that of man and also a desire to remove those is advantages," argues Chaman Nahal regarding feminism in India.. Sudha Murthy is one such author who has won the hearts of her readers.

### **Nature and Women**

Indian author and educator Sudha Murthy works tirelessly to foster cultural growth in her community. Her literature has a significant impact on the liberation of women. As a social activist, Murthy is concerned with the traditional Indian setting, in which women face many restrictions due to societal norms. The book "Gently falls the Bakula" highlights the obstacles women encounter at every juncture of their lives. The novel's main heroine, Shrimathi, is well portrayed by the author, who goes into great length describing her appearance and personality. A tall, slender woman with a wheatish complexion and attractive, unobscured features, Ms. Shrimathi Deshpande was quite a sight. She always adorned her hair with a garland of bakula blossoms. She was considered "one of the classes brightest" (p. The community's racial prejudice is on full display, as is its attachment to the Bakula flowers.

Hubli and Bombay serve as the stage for the novel's events. Each setting has its own set of norms and traditions. Perhaps every woman, like Shrimathi, gets two chances at life. Every person's strength and resilience is enhanced by the role ecology plays in their daily lives. Shrimathi, a main character in the tale, was often shown holding a Bakula flower. Like a lover's love, "even as it dried up, it would still give off the same fragrance" (p. 19). Some people have the mindset of misogynists, who believe that women deserve special treatment just because they are female. Therefore, the guy must have a considerable personality in order to play the role. There was a social stigma against men crying in public (p. 21). The chauvinists put women on the scale in the name of society's expectations for them. Girls were not always treated with the utmost respect, even when they were young. Women were penalized for speaking out in public and taking a position for their beliefs, but males were not held to the same standards. When Shrikanth and his pals discuss Shrimathi throughout the story, she never responds. However, she did very well on the board test and decided to follow her interest in history rather than major in science. Shrikant's displeasure with her achievement stems from the male-dominated society that ultimately restricted their marriage.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Subramanian, Prema & Arputhamalar, Aruna (2021)** Many emerging Indian authors of the modern age have achieved international fame with their work written in English. Indian English literature has flourished in recent decades thanks to the efforts of countless authors who have contributed to the field via their imaginative portrayals in a wide variety of literary forms. As a prominent member of this generation of Indian women writers, Sudha Murthy has made significant contributions to Indian English literature. In all of her artistic endeavors, she manages to convey the essence of Indian culture. She also makes an effort to include elements from Indian mythology in her writing. In Dollar Bahu, she depicts Indian culture accurately and also tries to highlight the difficulties of an immigrant marriage set against an Indian cultural

backdrop. The purpose of this article is to analyze Gouramma's case of culture shock in order to raise the reader's consciousness about such issues as marriage and relocation.

**B. Parinitha. (2022)** Stories have been passed down from parent to kid for centuries in order to instill moral values. Children's books provide invaluable guidance for their development and serve as a solid basis for their future. Reading picture books is a great way to help kids build self-esteem, learn to manage their emotions, and find solutions to challenging situations. The themes of her children's books emphasized the value of family and community. Her books teach youngsters about our customs through the eyes of their favorite characters. This research attempts to examine three children's novels written by Sudha Murthy through the lenses of the "tabula rasa" and "Kohlberg's Theory of moral judgment" ideas. The study analyzes the moral lessons taught by the stories in how I Taught My Grandmother to Read and Other Stories, Grandma's Bag of Stories, and The Magic Drum and Other Favorite Stories.

**Alyahya, Rimah (2019)** through her writing, Sudha Murthy encourages women to face adversity with strength and resolve. The focus of this study is on the female protagonists of three novels by Sudha Murthy: "Gently Falls the Bakula," "House of Cards," and "Mahaswetha," and how they struggle to break free of their ordinary lives and pursue their dreams. A literature search was conducted to help with the goals of the study. We have reviewed three books: "Gently Falls the Bakula," "House of Cards," and "Mahaswetha." Furthermore, research publications from Peer-Reviewed Journals were also reviewed. We were able to learn about women's struggles and how they overcame them by turning to literature in search of answers on how to live fulfilling lives for themselves. The study's results provide light on the brutality, denigration, and exploitation that protagonists like Anupama, Mridula, and Shrimati experience in the books. It is also discovered that the central themes in all three novels—"Gently Falls the Bakula," "House of Cards," and "Mahaswetha"—are man-woman relationships, societal acceptability, and alienation in the contemporary world. Men like Sanjay, Srikant, and Anand are heavily influenced by the power of luxury, comfort, and materialism, steadily climbing the corporate ladder without realizing the value of family life, while women like Mridula, Shrimati, and Anupama remain consistently pure, hardworking, and innocent. The women's personalities have paid a heavy price for the men's pursuit of wealth, prestige, and power. Success cannot be bought with money or fake ideals, as the female heroes learn. In addition, they exert tremendous effort in order to break through the limitations imposed by a male-dominated culture. Read works that outline social and ethical principles. Life is shown as a journey filled with learning and unlearning events that cross paths with many hurdles and tests of perseverance. As we see in Sudha Murthy's characters, these roadblocks force us to make a choice. Despite the difficulty of their decisions, they mustered the strength, focus, and meaning necessary to open up a new vista. Realizing our true worth is a never-ending endeavor, but the rewards are worth the effort. Learning about oneself isn't a picnic; it takes hardship and introspection. This is a story about people finding the strength to face a new day.

**Gnanamuttu, Anita (2022)** On August 19, 1950, in Shiggaon, North Karnataka, Sudha Murthy entered this world. The chairman of the Infosys Foundation, Sudha is also an author, educator, philanthropist, and successful Indian entrepreneur. English and Kannada author Sudha Murthy has written extensively. Her contributions to English and Kannada literature, as well as her social activism, have earned her widespread renown. She has published nine novels, two books for kids, three travel guides, and four manuals on various technical subjects. The goal of showcasing the jewels of Indian literature written in English is

sometimes referred to as "Indian English Literature." In "Gently Falls the Bakula," a young couple's narrative is told in a straightforward manner. The protagonist's sufferings as a result of being stuck in an emotionally distant family are vividly shown. Feminism is the ideology that advocates for women's complete and total political, economic, and social equality. Feminism shows its face all across the globe. The story of Shrimati and Shrikant Deshpande, two young people who fell in love and wed over their families' objections, inspired the novel gently falls the Bakula. In this story, Sudha Murthy explores the challenges that women confront in today's culture and in her own family after entering into a love marriage.

## **TRANSFORMATION OF FEMININE CHARACTERS IN SUDHA MURTHY'S WORK**

Murthy, as her works show, is a leading feminist who fights for women's freedom and equal rights. Her literature reveals a keen awareness of her gender and a focus on issues unique to women. She shows us the world as it is, complete with significant concerns about our modern views on men, women, and marriage. She examines the authentic emotional and social ties that unite women. They must adapt to a culture that places a premium on the past while still embracing the present. The protagonist in Sudha Murthy's novels is often shown as open to any kind of lifestyle shift. She depicts the psychological and emotional discordances of these ladies as if she could read their minds. Her works center on women and the significance of forming a unique sense of self-identity. It shows how a mother gives her everything to her family yet is never appreciated for her efforts. In the end, it teaches that all women deserve respect and equal opportunities regardless of their status. One of the key points that Sudha Murthy makes is that there is a threshold beyond which one's obedience and submission become less significant and the pursuit of one's own pleasure becomes paramount. She wants space and respect, so the characters leave the family to pursue their careers. The average Indian lady has the patience and perseverance of a saint. Despite their seeming balance of faith and skepticism, they are all directed by the spirit. Murthy is most definitely a writer who means what he writes.

The wise words of Sudha Murthy are, "Though you reach the sky- make sure your feet are always grounded." Because being always successful makes one arrogant and constantly unsuccessful makes one timid, but being consistently successful and sometimes unsuccessful makes one wiser, you should have encountered some challenges in your life. To become a really mature human being, you must, therefore, face adversity, helplessness, study others, and feel compassion for them. She finds happiness in helping others and draws an analogy between herself and a tree that shares its bounty.

Disciplined author Sudha Murthy never exaggerates the influence of freedom on her characters, such as having extramarital relationships or lesbian experiences with her friends. Murthy made it quite obvious in her writings that modern women are no longer passive or dependant on males. They see a woman's competence as being on par with a man. These days, a woman's contributions to the home income aren't restricted to the housework. The books depict strong, independent female protagonists who triumph over adversity and pursue personal growth and economic autonomy via furthering their education. They've figured out how to be self-sufficient and are doing quite well on their own. Her female protagonists struggle to achieve their own individuality by rejecting the norms and conventions that have held them back. They aren't completely opposed to the social order and its principles, but neither are they prepared to accept

them in their current form. Her female protagonists are progressive, powerful, and fearless in their fight for social status. Because of this, she will forever be known as a pioneering feminist author. Her works provide a fresh perspective on marital life. When given the chance, people excel and find fulfillment. According to Sudha Murthy, women all across the globe have to juggle job and family responsibilities. In her books, the women characters suffer at the hands of the patriarchy. They rise above their adversity by embracing their independence; as a result, they triumph over the odds and become strong, independent women.

## **TRADITIONALISM AND FEMINISM IN NOVEL DOLLAR BAHU**

Vinu (Vinuta) is the novel's first major female character. She had long, thick hair that was plaited and was fair with strong, stunning black eyes and a straight, pointed nose. She was somewhat startled to see someone sitting in her usual spot. Vinu is your typical Indian middle-class girl and a great representation of Indian culture as a whole. In his little time there, he had seen that Vinu did the bulk of the household chores. He could hear her being summoned from the comfort of his terrace room: "Vinu, have you plucked the flowers for puja? ", "Vinu, where are the ironed clothes? ", "Vinu, where is the bigger kadai? ", "Vinu, add some salt to the daal? ", and so on. Who exactly was she? An orphan, an impoverished relative, a maid, a housekeeper, or...? However, when she called Bheemanna Desai "uncle," he immediately realized that she was a college student. Chandru didn't know what to make of it. Some could argue she's ideal since she's gorgeous, talented, and down-to-earth all at once. She is dedicated to her family and has strong values. She puts forth a lot of effort but never raises her voice or her standards.

The next evening, he overheard Bheemanna saying to Vinu after dinner, "Vinu, I could not acquire the precise color you had requested for. Here, take this instead; it was my gift to you. "Oh, that's fine. Also, this is rather lovely. 'I like this blue color,' Vinu said enthusiastically. The male protagonist, known only as "Chandru," realizes she is different from his sister when she cheerfully receives a sari from her uncle that isn't the one, she had requested. She isn't a spoiled brat and she doesn't have a low socioeconomic status. After losing her parents at an early age, she was taken in by her uncle and his family, where she had a kind and supportive upbringing. She is the ideal wife material. She has a tough persona and role to play. She has a strong passion for music and would have wanted to make a profession out of it, but she gave it all up to marry a guy who, in the meat and potatoes of life, doesn't care much for the arts. Aside from her working lady persona, she also has a secret streak of independence. She despises being financially dependent on anybody, and this quality ultimately wins Girish's heart.

When a woman gets married in the Indian culture, she not only joins the man's family but also his mother, father, sisters, brothers, and other relatives. Sudha Murthy's subtle and perceptive silence allows her to take in every detail. She delves into what it's like to be a wife, a mother-in-law, and a sister-in-law, among other female roles. Beautifully depicting a middle-class family in Jayanagar, Bangalore, 'Dollar-Bahu' is a must-watch. The story emphasizes the value of family and the bonds formed within it above material possessions.

The first part of the novel takes place in India, and it's here that the heroine Vinuta's sensibilities are examined against the context of the crumbling relationships in her family as a result of her mother-in-law's unrelenting pursuit of the almighty dollar. When Vinita's mother-in-law Gouramma comes to see her eldest son Chandru in the United States, we move into the story's second act. On the American stage, Sudha



Murthy has masterfully braided together and juxtaposed the lives of several Indians now residing in the United States. Meeting new people helps Gouramma grow up on the inside, and she comes to value the bonds of family more highly than she valued 'Dollar' before.

The novel's emphasis is on the unexpected turns it takes. As the story progresses, the many narrative twists are gradually revealed, creating a number of exciting surprises. When Chandru is moved to the United States, his and Vinuta's relationship comes to a sudden end. The sudden death of Vinuta's uncle Bheemanna jolts Vinuta out of her tranquil routine at home in Dharwad. In order to be closer to Shamanna, Chandru's father, Vinuta moves to Bangalore to live with her aunt and enrolls in the same school. Chandru's brother Girish has married Vinuta.

### **SUDHA MURTY'S 'MAHASHWETA' DEALS WITH THE EMANCIPATION OF A MODERN WOMAN**

Literature is a reflection of reality since it combines truth and fantasy. Literature, and fiction in particular, has played a part in portraying real-world events via made-up characters. Social, political, and cultural developments in India have all been profoundly influenced by works of Indian literature. Similarly, a variety of writers in India's literary canon may be used to track the evolution of women's representation from antiquity to the present day. Women's quest for independence may be understood as a natural development from their subjugation at the hands of males to their eventual liberation. Women in today's literature are portrayed as strong, capable protagonists who can stand on their own two feet. Even in Sudha Murty's work *Mahashweta*, the heroine is a modern lady. The story offers encouragement and the strength to overcome discrimination. Novels, technical books, travelogues, anthologies of short tales and non-fiction pieces, and six books for children are just a few of Sudha Murty's many works. Aside from the Padma Shri, she also won the R.K. Narayan Award for Literature in 2006. All the main Indian languages now have her novels in their libraries.

*Mahashweta* is an inspiring story of courage and perseverance in a corrupt world. Those who have suffered because of the bigotry that persists in our society might take heart from this inspiring tale. This book discusses the social stigma of leukoderma, a skin ailment that causes sufferers' relatives to become white. The book's main character, *Mahashweta*, is a nod to the renowned work "*Kadambari*" by Banabhatta. The *Mahashweta* of *Kadambari* dresses in white whenever she is tasked with reviving Pundarika. *Mahashweta*, a key figure in Banabhatta's epic work "*Kadambari*," is mentioned in this book. Banabhatta wrote a happy ending, but that doesn't always happen in real life. *Mahashweta* of *Kadambari*, resplendent in white, revives her dead lover, Pundarika. The actress who has only ever starred in plays with happy endings had a terrible thing happen to her in real life. As she hears more reports that Anand is in India attending his sister's wedding to a rich guy and isn't looking for her, she starts to question herself and contemplating committing herself from a ledge on the mound of the Goddess temple. Despite losing all else, the story's heroine finds fulfillment by embracing her unique self. Author Sudha Murty always creates fascinating stories with strong female leads. The novel's heroine, a woman who has begun to develop white spots on her skin, is shunned by everyone, even the guy she was supposedly in love with and married. Anupama embodies everything that makes a great Indian heroine—she is stunningly beautiful, brilliantly intelligent, and has impeccable character. The only negative thing about her is that she is poor. Our heroine's first love,

the brilliant and affluent Anand, is just as charming and intelligent as our heroine. After that, Anupama's stepmother and her usual useless stepfather come. Anand has his mother and sister backing him up because they want to show off how high up in society they are.

Mahashweta, a book by Sudha Murty, tells the story of a contemporary lady called Anupama. This stunning young lady comes from very modest beginnings. Dr. Anand, who comes from a wealthy family, is captivated by her beauty and acting talent. Anand's mother Radhakka eventually agrees to their marriage despite the family's disapproval. Throughout the book, Anupama's tenacity and resolve are highlighted by the author. Unlike other conventional Indian women, she breaks free of the constraints of being a daughter-in-law and refuses to lower her standards of personal honor to accommodate the biases of her in-laws. Anand then leaves for graduate school after the wedding. Eventually, she discovers that the microscopic white spots on her foot are caused by leukoderma and that they mar her otherwise flawless appearance. After Radhakka's mother sees her skin condition and decides she is a disgrace to the family, she is not permitted to perform any housework and is shamed by her husband. Before being married, Anupama knew quite well that she did not have the white spots, but Radhakka was not yet ready to accept this. Anupama is not appreciative of her new life as the wife of a wealthy family since the money has merely lowered her status to that of a servant. In addition, her in-laws disown her and send her back to her fathers because of the lies she spoke to Anand and his family. She cannot confide in anybody, not even Anand, in her pain.

Anupama, unlike other conventional Indian ladies, does not care about her social standing in her family. The first sign of a modern lady is when she walks out the door without waiting for her father to finish pleading with her mother-in-law. In this case, Anu does not stifle her sense of pride but rather works to overcome the oppression she has experienced as a result of discrimination and social exclusion. The idea of staying in a marriage that brought her nothing but suffering was beneath Anupama's dignity.

Anupama returned to the place where Shamanna was waiting and gathered the few belongings that were really hers, including a picture of Anand. She grasped his hand and slipped out of the home, bag in hand, without a word. She knew that she would never see the home or its inhabitants again, yet she did not turn around. (59)

Anupama's stepmother Sabakka is often accusing her of keeping her stepsisters from getting marriage offers because of her leukoderma. This happens in her father's residence. Anupama is too weak to withstand such cruel words. Anand is aware of Anupama's predicament, but he, too, ignores her correspondence. She learns that neither her mother nor Anand are on her side. Suicide is an option she considers due to her stepmother's constant accusations and her skin condition.

## CONCLUSION

We can say that it is possible to trace the evolution of female characters in Indian literature from the time of the ancients to the present day throughout the works of a wide range of writers. Women have been represented as independent and powerful in recent works of literature. Novels by Sudha Murthy include people from many walks of life. Her characters' demeanor and conduct are heavily impacted by societal norms, in which the primacy of the self is emphasized from an early age. While God has blessed us with nature, women have bestowed this gift onto us.

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