



Sudhamurti's Mahashweta: A Thematic Analysis

KEYWORDS

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Sudha Murti's novel entitled "Mahashweta" seem to have been originated from Bana Bhatt's Sanskrit novel "Kadambari" where Mahashweta plays a significant role as a heroine. The writer tends to use mythical method to show the glaring differences between classical love bloomed out of inner beauty of soul and modern love which is based on no emotional commitment and sacred bond but on transitory and illusionary display of physical beauty. The following expression of the heroine Anupama of the novel "Mahashweta" shows her intense and unconditional love to her lover Dr. Anand who does not honour her love simply because of the fact she suffers from an incurable disease called leukoderma after marriage.

Like Rohini to Chandra, like Lakshmi to Narayana, am I to him. Just as the creeper depends on a tree, emotionally I depend on him. I cannot live without him, and for his sake, I am ready to renounce everything. Let society say anything it wishes, I do not care... 1

This is the true and emotional outpouring of Anupama, the central figure of Sudha Murty's novel "Mahashweta". She is playing the role of Mahashweta in the play based on Bana Bhatta's Sanskrit novel 'Kadambari'. The essence of the novel is the love between the heroine Mahashweta and the hero Pundurika, Mahashweta's beloved, meets with an untimely death and the princes wearing a white sari and garland, undertakes a severe penance in the forest. Her resolve is unshakable, her dear friend Kadambari tries her best to dissuade her, but to no avail. Finally Mahashweta's heart rendering love for Pundarika brings him back to life and the lovers are reunited. But can this blissful between the lovers is possible in the real world? The novelist tends to search an answer to this question through the story of "Mahashweta."

'Mahashweta' (2007) is an inspiring story of courage and resilience in a world marred by illusions and betrayals. This poignant tale offers hope and solace to the victims of the prejudices that govern society even today. In the novel the protagonist Anupama's fairytale marriage to Anand falls apart when she discovers a white patch on her foot and learns that she has leukoderma. Abandoned by her uncaring in laws and insensitive husband, she is forced to return to her father's home in the village. The social stigma of a married woman living with her parents her stepmother's continual barbs and the ostracism that accompanies her skin condition force her to contemplate suicide. Determined to rebuild her life against all odds, Anupama goes to Bombay where she finds success, respect and the promise of an enduring friendship.

In Mahashweta the protagonist Anupama inspires the readers to develop virtues of humility, sincerity and resilience

Mahashweta is a great novel it highlights false values and superstitions many of us have. These values prevent us from living fulfilling lives. The story is about a beautiful girl Anupama and how she gets the disease after her marriage and what hellish torture she undergoes because of the people around her the disease itself. The superficial beauty that one sees often and the inner beauty that one neglects above all, her husband is a doctor who knows it very well that leukoderma is a harmless disease in which a person suffers from a deficiency in the pigmentation of skin. At one point of time she decides to commit suicide only the time she realizes that she should not die for callous and unworthy people and decides to take up life with more confidence, faith and compassion. Her transformation is depicted by the writer beautifully and she goes back into her world of stage plays. People love her, admire her and respect her for her qualities and it is when she realizes that inner beauty is more important than anytime else. Her husband who initially deserts her comes back to her at the end only to get a refusal. The writer has portrayed various aspects of Indian society – arranged marriages, dominating mother-in-law, helpful friends, hypocrite relatives, a cursing stepmother and worried parents of a young Indian girl.

External Beauty words a special place in the society than the interior beauty. This wonderful fact has been brought out very well by this fantabulous novel. The novel Mahashweta is very simple in its style but the message that has been promoted is enormous. The novel explains how women can achieve and lead a respectable life when the possibilities are against them. Society ostracizes women when their external beauty is sometimes marred. The main character in this novel is Anupama, who is an accomplished beautiful girl, whose beauty becomes a pain when she is affected by Leukoderma. Leukoderma is a cosmetic disease but this has changed the lives of many in the society that has caused a lot of hardships and injury in the minds of people who suffer from it. The tough stance taken by Anupama who overcomes all odds and finds peace in the work she has always loved to do.

The novel Mahashweta was a relatable piece of art expressed in a very simple but quite an impressive manner. It was a breezy read that really hits our conscience without getting preachy. The novel was inspiring and contemporary. Sudha Murty recounts a real – life experience of how this novel of hers changed a couple's life for the better. Perhaps, that is the best part of being a writer. The writer never knows, but their words might inspire a dead soul to start living again or bring joy to a weary heart. The words reach people in the farthest corners of the world, and when the writer come to know of such incidents, feels simply out of this world – as if part of their mission of be-

ing on earth has been fulfilled. The way relationships were presented in the novel does needs a special appreciation Relationship between a wife and husband. Relationship between two friends Relationship between a sister and a so called Brother. Relationship between a doctor and a patient. Relationship between a man and a woman characters were damn perfect so were interactions between them. So it was a feel to be a good novel and improves the reader's clarity over things and makes them aware of things much better.

Leukoderma in our country was a very dreaded disease not because it was not curable or contagious but because it mars the external beauty of a person and was mistaken as Leprosy. Anupama in the story was left without any moral or financial support to fend for her life and what an illustrious life she makes of it. And in the end when her husband realizes his mistake and wants her back in life she refuses to live with him.

Through the novel Mahashweta, Sudha Murty has tried to emphasise few things such as.

The myth that leukoderma is hereditary, or infectious disease.

When we take marriage rows – we should take them seriously.

In our life we should never take our near and dear ones for granted.

The novel Mahashweta was the triumph of Anupama to life on her terms defying conventions, marriage vows and social conventions and even disease. A marriage is a commitment for better or worse, till death do us part. Does every marriage meet with the same fate? Well not always..... Mostly when marriage vows are broken, it was believed that there were major contentions which could not be resolved. In spite of uniting in a lifelong bond the partners separate. But it's hard to imagine a small white patch leading to the dissolution of a marriage. Yes, that's precisely what happens with the main protagonist – Anupama of the novel Mahashweta. The novel proves to be very interesting with the feminine concept.

Indian women strive towards self fulfillment; they eschew the need to be defined the differentiated with reference to man; they unite in dethroning the myths of femininity, motherhood and marriage; and they illustrate that emancipation was at best a slow evolutionary process. The need of the hour was a reassessment of what exactly the Indian woman wants. She chooses to opt out of the purposive control of man over her. She elects to exercise control over her own life, her own body, the right for example to had an abortion if she needs it. At the same time, she wanted the grace and the tenderness associated traditionally with femininity. In other words, she wanted to have it all, the best of both the worlds!

One way to reconcile these apparently opposing ideas was to envisage liberation as a process of development seen as an integral, cultural process, the development of everyman and woman, the whole of man and woman. Even in the west, the liberation of women has been partial and contradictory. People were looking for newer ways of living not only because there were limits to resources, to the absorptive capacity of human beings to inequality and to exploitation, but also because they were positively motivated towards a larger concept of love, joy and sympathy towards fellow human beings and they want to transcend the bureaucratic society of programmed consumption. The

true magnitude of the studies on the woman would be measured in the future years by the realisation they give to women – which they need not compete with anyone, that all they have to do is to march hand in hand with man and go forward as equal partners, sharing experiences and aspirations.

To achieve this, a gradual restructuring and organization of social forces and a mobilisation of political will towards the common good would be required. The final aim, eventually, was to create another international environment, economic, political and cultural, that would guarantee the self-reliant development of all human beings.

The Indian woman had come so far and yet a long way to traverse!

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