



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

English

QUEST FOR IDENTITY IN SUDHA MURTHY'S "GENTLY FALLS THE BAKULA"

KEY WORDS:

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INTRODUCTION:-

Sudha Murthy was born on 19 August 1950 in Shiggaon in Karnataka,India,The daughter of surgeon Dr.R.H. Kulkarni and his wife Vimala Kulkarni. She is an indian philanthropist and writer in Kannada and English.She began her professional career as a computer scientist and Engineer. She is the chairperson of the Infosys Foundation and a member of public health care initiatives of the gates foundation several orphanages participated in rural development efforts, supported the movement to provide all Karnataka government schools with computer and library facilities and established "The Murthy classical library of India" at Harvard University.

Gently Falls the Bakula is a story written by Sudha Murthy in the milieu of traditional 1980s which is relevant even today. It is Murthy's first novel and remains close to her heart. The story probes that values and ethics of modern life and marriage. Murthy has the knack of writing about issues much debated about and still adds fresh perspective to it. In the process she compels us to take a look at age-old values and the dissonance of gender inequality and seeing her worth beyond of a wife is explored in a very realistic way in an Indian context.

QUEST FOR IDENTITY:-

A Quest is a long and difficult word for something.Our individuality is under attack as never before. The huge new forces new technology and the rise in fundamentalism are in their different ways climbing to threaten to control of our own minds and so the whole way of our society functions. Quest for identity and female assertiveness in contemporary Indian fiction in English is a bifocal subject. It directs its gaze toward philosophy and psychology and looks toward social science and literature. The very expression 'Quest for Identity' has become a fashionable term in literary and other studies.Day-in Day-out the newspapers report on several sections of society resort to the expression 'search for identity'.

In psychology and sociology ,identity is a person's conception and expression of their individuality or group affiliations such as national identity and cultural identity. It is may be defined as the distinctive characteristic belonging to any given individual or shared by all members of a particular social category o group.

In this novel "Gently falls the Bakula" deals about the main concept about the main concept is 'what is more important to the life'- "A successful career or a happy marriage". The protagonist Shrimati's marriage loses her ambition and her self-interest takes her as tall. She identified herself and move her life in narrow way.

QUEST IN THE NOVEL:-

Gently falls the Bakula is the story of a marriage that loses its way as ambition and self-interest take their toll.The novel is a beautiful tale about the ideologies the family conflicts, the stereotypical mother-in-law and sister-in-law verses hatred daughter-in-law, the illusion about educational qualification, marriage and match making all are familiar. Shrimati the protagonist by becoming a dutiful, dedicated, sincere and affectionate wife, she enabled him to reach the peak of glory in his IT profession.

Shrimati sacrificed her professional desire and dedicated life to her husband wholeheartedly. But shrikant's inability to spend time with her or atleast to recognize her serviced to him shattered all her dreams of a happy family life to pieces. Her single mine devotion didn't notice by her husband. So she took a hard decision to get away from him,not ready to live with the immortal things. No one

in this male dominated society would appreciated her step not shrimati had left him without even bothering about what people would think. She had acted on what she fell was right. Murthy has portrayed a strong women finding her own identity .

SEARCHING HER IDENTITY:-

Shrimati and Shrikant are neighbours, whose families don't get along too well. A Tree of Bakula (a fragrant flower) separates the two homes. They are class-mates up to the X standard .The ambitious boy aspires to be the school topper, but it is Shrimathi, who tops while he ends up second. Shrimati is fond of history. So studies the subject, and Shrikant chooses subjects, and which enable him to ultimately pursue an Engineering degree from IIT, Bombay after his XII standard. Love blossoms between them higher secondary, but distance doesn't diminish it even a bit .**The Bakula flowers are the attachments to her love letters, carrying the symbolic meaning that the fragrance of their love will never go away.**

Shrimathi's mother, Kamala warns her that she will never be loved by Shrimati's mother and sister and that every daughter-in-law's desire to be appreciated by her mother-in law will not be fulfilled in her case. Shrikanth holds ground against his mother who wants him to marry another girl .Shrimati makes it clear that what matters to her is his love, affection and companionship. Shrimati has to put up with a taunting mother-in-law who was gest a chance to get back at her enemies. But, soon the bride leaves for Bombay to stay with her husband. However, as per Shrikant's wishes she sends some money for her mother-in-law.

Shrimati is reminded that her-in-laws have no affection for her; she intends to continue studies but the scheming mother-in-law pulls me fast on her .She bluffs that she had borrowed a huge sum of money from an uncle and so she wants her son to repay the loan .His sister is the originator of this bluff, basically intended to put Shrimathi in trouble. Shrimathi gives up her idea of higher studies only to work and help repay the loan. In return, she does not get even an iota of appreciation.

Shrimati's Ph.D. dream is still distant .Meanwhile, Shrikant reaches the top management and their material well-being improves Shrimati's loneliness accentuates but Shrimathi is adamant about not having children .She suggests adoption, which is also promptly turned down.

"She knew what she liked and she did exactly that. Shrikant, you are very lucky to get such a companion" (Gently falls the Bakula-168)

Finally Shrimati realizes that, Shrikant loves his career more than her. Shrimati just becomes a personal secretary to entertain Shrikant's business partners in his life. She realizes that there is no more love, affection and meaning to their relations. And she cannot blame anyone else for this. She is the one responsible for her situation now. She gave all power and authority to Shrikant to behave with her like this, to take her for granted by giving up her everything for him and his success in his career. Now, when she looks back, she has nothing. Her life is empty.

BAKULA IS A SYMBOL OF LOVE:-

Shrikant remembered many ancient stories that connected the Bakula with romance. It seems in the olden days, when young men travelled far distances for many days, they would carry small objects in memory of their loved ones. The Bakula flower was one

such memento that these young men carried, because, even though it would dry up, it would still give out the same fragrance, like the beloved's love. Without realizing it, Shrikant had come to associate the Bakula flower with Shrimati. It is true that they hardly ever spoke to each other but it was equally true that there was a strange attraction between them.

The novel ends with Shrikant looking back at his domineering self, and how cruel he was to his wife by not giving her due. He realizes that he was the causes for her departure but his profession nature gets better of him, at the cost of his personal life.

“ The Bakula tree, whose flowers symbolised the love between them had fallen sadly”.

SUMMING UP:-

Through the story was written three decades ago , it bears a mirror against our current times too: Our ingratitude to the contribution of certain uncomplaining people to our success and also,our sheer ignorance of our deep passion as a sacrifice for other people. It might often be difficult to choose between certain people and goals.

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