

Consequences faced by the protagonist in Sudha Murthy's *Mahaswetha*

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Abstract

Sudha Murthy is a social worker, philanthropist and author. She is the chairperson of Infosys Foundation. *Mahaswetha* is a Kannada novel which is translated into English. This novel is totally focused on the protagonist facing several problems in her life. It is an inspiring and sensitive story. The protagonist of the novel is belongs to a lower caste. Superstitious believes plays a major role in this novel. The novel *Mahaswetha* depicts how the people in the society were affected by their own major issues. The protagonist faced many consequences because of her status. The novel deals with Suppression, Marital relationship, Women Empowerment, Caste discrimination and superstitious beliefs. The people from the society think that women are weaker sex and they are not equal to men and women became the least sufferers.

Key words: Superstitious belief, Suppression, Marital Relationship, Caste Discrimination.

Sudha Murthy is a philanthropist, teacher, writer, author and a social worker. She is a chairperson of Infosys Foundation. She got many awards. She explores the impacts of the life of humans in the society. The novel *Mahaswetha* explains the consequences that everyone faces in their own life. The protagonist of the novel is Anupama, "She is a superb actress and an excellent student, always getting the top rank. She even sings Hindustani classical music" (MS 10). Before her marriage she was isolated by her family members. Anupama lost her mother in her childhood so she was under the control of her step mother. Her step mother had two daughters. The entire family except her father thought that Anupama was a curse and also she was a burden for the family and they isolated Anupama. She grew up with her own talent. She performed many dramas and then she donates that money to the poor people. She was a fair, talented and a genuine person.

Anupama get married to Dr. Anand who is a good and rich man and after marriage Anupama felt that she was lucky that she got a caring husband. The protagonist's life is a tragic tale which she couldn't expect in her life. Her marriage life was not a happy life. The main reason is that she belongs to a lower caste. Anand married Anupama only because of her fairness and talent.

Anupama's life is full of miserable. Anand moved to England for his higher studies. Again isolation plays a major role in her life through the marriage. She is isolated by her mother-in-law. Only Anand accepted her by marrying her into his life without any hesitation. Anupama's mother-in-law is not interested in her as she belongs to a lower caste and also for belonging to a poor family. She was treated like a slave by her own family and was blamed by her family members that she was not a responsible girl.

During the day of Durga pooja coal falls upon her leg and caused burning. She was wounded and gets white patches. Late she consults a doctor and confirmed that it was a type of skin disease and it was not curable. She was totally disappointed. Days passed on. White patches spreads fastly in her whole body. Anupama was isolated from her house and society because of her disease. She was affected by a skin disease named Leucoderma. Leucoderma is not a type of dangerous disease and also said to be skin cancer. Anupama's mother-in-law makes her to live away from her husband.

Anupama secretly visits the doctor without her mother-in-laws knowledge. This helps her mother-in-law a chance to send her out from the house. She blames that Anupama has an illegal relationship with someone and is going to meet that particular person. Anupama's mother-in-law creates a story against Anupama and her sister-in-laws also supports her mother. Anupama's sister-in-law had an illegal relationship and knowing this Anupama warned her. So she panics and thought that if Anupama stayed in her house she will reveals the truth. As a mother, she said the entire gossip story to Anand and makes him to create a black mark towards Anupama. The story told by her mother-in-law creates a bad image about Anupama.

Anupama's mother-in-law sends Anupama to her father's house. She did not have any permission to go back to her husband's house. Her mother-in-law treats her as an untouchable. Amarnath Prasad states, "The importance of men and their superiority has been a part of Indian society more for generations. Women had always been the less important individuals. When a woman lives in a male dominated society obviously, she undergoes many hardships" (99). Anupama's step sister's marriage was cancelled as she was staying in her father's home and also she had white patches. The whole society turns against Anupama. Anupama writes letter again and again continuously to Anand. But she did not get any reply from Anand. Finally she decided to commit suicide. She was totally vexed and she decided to end her life. Later Anupama realized that if she commits suicide, she herself gave a chance to speak worse about her to the people in her village. She decided to go to Mumbai where her friend Sumithra lives with her husband.

Anupama reached Bombay and met her friend Sumithra. Tears passed in her eyes. Sumithra supports her and she arranges a job for Anupama. She stayed with Sumithra. Anupama felt that Sumithra's husband was a genuine person. But one day, when Sumithra was not in home he misbehaves with Anupama. So she runs away from that house. Anupama shares the entire incident to her friend Dolly and Dolly gave her house to Anupama to stay.

Slowly she gets relief from her pain of isolation and her disease. Anupama's started to accept the changes in her life. She got a job as a Sanskrit professor. She came back to her old life and started to live a normal life. She conducted many dramas in her college. Accidentally, Anupama meets Dr. Vasant and they became good friends. Anupama shares all her life story to Vasant. Vasant expresses his love towards Anupama. But she refused and advice Vasant to continue as a good friend. Anupama's life filled with lot of emotions mingled with good and bad. Kuswant Singh comments in his article 'Travelling in a Woman's Compartment' that "some made happy marriages; some were not happy" (The Tribune, March 2, 2002).

Anand came back to India and he realizes all the truth about Anupama. He was totally disappointed about the injustice towards Anupama and he felt Guilty. He started searching Anupama everywhere. But Anand could not get any information about Anupama. He went to Anupama's father's house. Anand thought that Anupama was in her Father's house. But she was not there and also Anand was come to know that Anupama's father died because of heart attack. Anupama send money to her step mother every month. Anupama's Stepmother apologizes to Anupama. At last Anand went to Mumbai.

Anupama was suppressed by the evil fate of her life but she overcomes all the struggles in her life through her will power. Her isolated life vanishes and she led a life as her own without any burden and difficulties. Anupama empowers as a woman who was suppressed by her own gender, mother-in-law and the members of her own family. She proves that she was an example of the women empowerment and that doesn't make one to think that women are the weaker sex in any sense. Women empowerment is a key for a society for women to nourish. In this modern world, most people did not believe in superstition. But some believed in superstitious beliefs and that leads to the fall. Humanity dies because of the inferiority complex of people in a society. Because of this reason many people in our society were breaking down in their life and struggling to come up. People though educated and living in the most modern society with certain values and respects sometimes in some occasion they tend to explicit the inner true self of real image. The image of tradition and customs which they concealed with their education exhibits its true colours and there suffers the least woman. Some women who were protecting their family tend to remain silent and live their life as if nothing happened to them. But some woman will break the chain of tradition and customs and live a life of their own will, a life of happiness that cannot be snatched away.

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