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**ANUPAMA – Torch Bearer for New Generation Women in Sudha
Murty's *Mahashweta***

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Abstract

The literature of India has played a significant part in the growth of both India and the rest of the globe. One of the most influential Indian women authors, particularly Sudha Murty, is an example of this. The writings of Sudha Murty are regarded as landmarks in contemporary English literature. As a prolific writer, she is able to cover a wide range of topics in her critique of society, including the political, social, educational, and home lives of Indian women. The purpose of the paper is to study the evolution of a new woman in Sudha Murty's novel Mahashweta. Women started regaining their lost identity and position in the last few decades of twentieth century, it was majorly due to the efforts laid by social reformers and the writers who penned down the importance of equality. The paper will highlight the difficulties faced by the protagonist as the replica of most of the women in male dominated society. At last with her education, she is able to follow her dream and live a successful life without any support of man in her life.

Keywords: Feminism, Sudha Murty, Anupama, Struggle in life, Education, A new woman.

Feminism plays a vital role in developing self-identity of woman. Earlier in the patriarchal society women are not given the fair treatment. It attempts to examine and analyse the various causes for women's subjugation. Feminism is a socio-political movement that purposes to create the political, social and economic fairness between male and females. Feminism fights to establish for equal opportunities for both men and women in concern of education, economic, social matters. This movement fights for the rights of women including for access of education, right to vote, to own property, equal rights within marriage, equal pay, and to have maternity leave.

Numerous feminist movements and ideologies have developed over the years and represent different viewpoints and objectives. In 1919, women rebelled for the right to vote that first rebel paved the way for Women's health and education laws in 1920. In the 1960's and 70's feminists demanded equal rights in the workplace.

The history of feminism in India can be divided into three phases:

1. The first phase began in the mid-19th century, favour of women rights by making reforms in education and customs involving women.



2. The second phase, from 1915 to Indian independence, began for struggle against colonial rule intensified. There was provision for women's upliftment through [affirmative action](#), maternal health and child care provision equal pay for equal work etc.
3. The third phase, post-independence, which has focused on fair treatment of women at home after marriage as well as the work force, and their right to political parity.

There are many Indian feminist writers, who through their writing, created a way for women to develop self-identity and have equal space in society just like man. In fact, the image of women from the ancient to the contemporary era can be traced in Indian fiction in different forms written by several authors. The progression of women from being subjugated under the clutches of men, to the liberated women, could be seen towards the struggle of independence. The novels of the contemporary era portray women as powerful images- independent, self-reliant and bold.

Sudha Murty is one such writer, who set a path for woman to lead a beautiful life without man power. Sudha Murty is one such voice, she is being heard and read not only through her words but also by her interest in business. She is a dynamic personality, a technocrat, a rationalist. She has earned a distinct place for her special attention to the plight of women. She has never tolerated injustice in her life. She has made the women characters play the pivotal role in her books. She is an icon of simple living, compassion and empathy. She had been shouldering her husband all through his tough way. Always seated on a back seat but remained a constant support for the Infosys foundation as well.

Sudha Murty's novel *Mahashweta* too, depicts the new age woman in the light of the protagonist. The novel furnishes hope and resilience against social stigma and prejudice. A prolific writer in English and Kannada, Sudha Murty has written novels, technical books, travelogues, collection of short stories and non-fiction pieces, and six books for children. She was the recipient of the R.K. Narayan Award for Literature and the Padma Shri in 2006. Her books have been translated into all the major Indian languages.

Mahashweta is one the best example to prove the society that woman is the great fighter in the world to create their own identity. The thinking of the society is that men can manipulate the woman but that is very well broken in the novel *Mahashweta*. The protagonist breaks the psyche of society and creates her own place and identity in the world. The husband never gives an identity but the hard work of women creates her own space in the world.



Sudha Murthy's novel *Mahashweta*, offers the readers a tale of a new age woman, named Anupama. She is very beautiful girl, who is from a small village. Her beauty and acting skills fascinate Dr. Anand, who belongs to a rich family. Eventually, Anand's mother Radhakka, reluctantly gets them married despite the family status. The author shines the spotlight on Anupama's resilience and determination throughout the novel. She frees herself away from the clutches of being a traditional daughter-in-law and unlike any other traditional Indian women, she does not subdue her self-respect and dignity for the sake of the prejudices their in-laws hold on to. After their marriage Anand goes abroad to pursue his masters, leaving Anupama with her in-laws. Her fairytale marriage meets with tragic end due to her white patch.

The situation has totally shaken her life and there was no single person who can help her in this situation, not even her husband Anand. The new era women are not born but they are made in this situation that they need to fight and prove the society that, one can make own future without the help of male. Anand as a husband should take the side of his wife in such critical situation but the same time, he left to reply her letters, at the same time denies opposing his mother. The rules of rich society are made in favour of male dominated society where they are never a victim but a rule. So, in the delima of husband-and-wife partition Anand stays at back foot and doesn't show any interest to help her. The innocence of Anupama is treated as an ill fitted woman in the rich society and her mother-in-law starts finding another girl for her son Anand. The desolateness of Anupama make her think to end her life and she decides to kill herself.

After much thinking, Anupama concludes to be brave woman and she decides to live a happy and respectable life at own cost. At one point she told Satya,

"I neither worry about the past, nor brood over the future. I accept life as it comes and don't have any regrets." (117)

This is the beginning of new woman. The writer Sudha Murthy is trying to give the same suggestion to all women that, do not end your life for some else but rise and fight. This new thought makes Anupama a torch bearer for new generation women. The author's main intention is to make women aware that they should acquire knowledge to defeat any problem in the life. Anupama left her life back in the village and goes to new city Bombay.



The author deliberately selects the city Bombay because this is the city of dream and does not follow the traditional customs which are against women. Anupama begins her new life with her college friend Sumithra, who stays with her husband. Sumithra's husband is not like Anand but he opens heartedly accepts Anupama in his house and gives her treatment like a sister. Anupama begins a new job new life in the city Bombay and realises that all other women do not bother about her white patch and her past. Anupama breaks the traditional thinking of all women and makes her own carrier and does not get bind to the old tradition to serve husband. She proves this by saying Satya,

“My experiences have taught me this. I have come to realize that courage and confidence are the real wealth in life. Education can prove your chances of success, but ultimately you have to face life all alone.” (116)

In the real time this novel is the best inspiration to all women. The courage Anupama shows is the most realistic way of life women should choose instead of suffering. The reader can see that each sentence of Anupama is the hope in the life of women who is a victim of male dominated society.



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