

**THE PLIGHT, REBEL AND EMERGENCE OF AN INDIAN WOMAN IN  
SUDHA MURTY'S NOVELS****Prof. Arun Santoshrao Rindhe<sup>1</sup>, Hon. Dr. Bharat S. Jadhao<sup>2</sup>**<sup>1</sup> *Research Scholar, Jijamata Mahavidyalaya, Buldhana.*Email: [arunrindhe1976@gmail.com](mailto:arunrindhe1976@gmail.com)<sup>2</sup> *Ph. D. Supervisor, Jijamata Mahavidyalaya, Buldhana, Maharashtra.***Abstract**

The journey of an Indian Woman's life, however, hasn't been a smoother or easier one but rather full of protest and struggle on the part of a woman. Her strife and consequent sufferings have strongly been articulated by the men as well as women novelists of earlier generation like Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Rabindranath Tagore, Mulk Raj Anand, Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai and others. Through their literary contributions, these authors have ushered in the new era in the field of Indian English literature. Highly educated and with their intellectual background coupled with their observation of life they can dissect the problems of women- their predicaments, their inner psyche and their transitory phase to rejoin the men and the society. As Meena Shirwadkar says, "Tradition, transition and modernity are stages through which the women in Indo-Anglian novel is passing' (153) Indian authors often cover a broad variety of subjects that represent Indian heritage, art, patriotism, societal ideals, and self awareness, among other things. Women authors have made significant contributions to the literary level of Indian English fiction. The most productive author of the modern era is Sudha Murty. Her works depict the difficulties faced by typical Indian women from the middle income strata in a patriarchal society. The purpose of this paper is to examine the plight, rebel and emergence of Indian women in Sudha Murty's novels while focusing on the issues that women confront in the stereotypically masculine culture. Her works include subjects like bravery, literacy, social injustices, feminist theorists, standing in society, the damaging consequences of matrimony on women, the impacts of superstitions, family assault, etc she mainly focuses on the realistic problems encountered by women in the family and the society. This research also aims to showcase the capability of women to fight against all odds of her life.

**Keywords:** Plight, Indian, Rebel, Feminine, Women, Patriarchal, Rights, Emergence.

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**Introduction:**

Contemporary Indian English literature focuses on important female-related issues, such as women's understanding of their identities, relationships with their husbands, their aspirations and aims. They had developed their own perspectives on the revival of women, her needs, wants, and problems. Indian English literature has carved out a substantial and unique space for itself in the literary world.

The great numbers of subjects that Indian authors write on are related to Indian culture, faith, nationality, social attitudes, and so forth. Female writers have largely improved the academic status of Indian English novels. Feminist ideas, concepts, and perspectives on women's issues began to

have an impact on Indian authors. The difficulties and challenges faced by women in society were the focus of various publications by women writers.

Several well-known Indian writers, including Sarojini Naidu, Kamala Das, Anita Nair, Sudha Murty, and Shoba De, have expressed their opposition to the prevalent social concerns, inequity, and harassment of women in ancient societies. Such scholars look at feminine sensitivities to help identify a woman's individuality in a conventional world. In comparison to earlier women, modern women are represented as being more assertive, liberated, and expressive in their utterances.

### **Discussion:**

In the English language, Indian authors have produced some of the most significant works in novel form. The scope, variety, and sophistication of Indian literature have all considerably increased. Indian authors who wrote in English have produced one of the most significant novels in history. The breadth, variety, and maturity of the Indian novel have all greatly increased. Through all the authors of the twentieth century, she continued to address a variety of subjects, such as social, racial, political, industrial, physiological, and female subjects. Each facet of a male's life is presently under the financial state's influence.

Indian authors often cover a broad variety of subjects that represent Indian heritage, art, patriotism, societal ideals, and self awareness, among other things. Women authors have made significant contributions to the literary level of Indian English fiction. Female issues and problems were extensively discussed by the newly emerging female writers. Compared to earlier generations of women, today's women are portrayed as being highly aggressive, emancipated, and expressive in their statements. Women and girls in patriarchal societies these authors investigate feminine perception to define a woman's individuality in a misogynistic culture.

The greatest important contributions to English-language literature have come from Indian writers. In the literary sphere, Indian English literature had attained autonomous standing. They subtly explore the mental anxiety and the sense of vulnerability of the women protagonists in their novels. Compared to women in the past, the house is the focal point of honor, commitment, struggle, and cooperation with relatives. Home used to be a place of happiness, dedication, and bonding with families, but today it's a place where people have to satisfy ridiculous needs through others, which leads to misunderstandings, suppression, hopelessness, and aggressiveness in their relationships.

The patriarchal subjugation of women is a recurring issue in all of their works, taking into account their unique financial circumstances. The idealistic lady's transformation into an assertive, narcissistic woman who is discovering and embracing her own individuality is the focus of the writers' concern.

Sudha Murty is one of the more successful and creative female writers of the contemporary age. Her articles present a realistic picture of the difficulties that ordinary, middle-class Indian women face in a patriarchal society, including political, social, medical, and other issues. In her works, she has captured the inner thoughts of women, their goals, concerns, aspirations, and disappointments, as well as their place in the legal system. Victimization, the detrimental effects of marriage on women, the effects of superstition, and the effects of globalization on family ties were the major subjects of her writings.

*Sudha Murty's* fictions have not only discarded the conservative customary and cultural practices that are prevalent in the society but also stress the importance of liberty and feminine individuality and freedom from gender bias and patriarchal discrimination for the plight, rebel and emergence of an Indian women in the novels. As a result, women feel that their lives have undergone the

complete radical transition from the confines of the male-dominated and patriarchal discrimination. The innumerable struggles faced by the women in their everyday life are intricately woven in the fiction by female authors.

The new women as depicted by *Sudha Murty* are hardworking, dedicated and delicate. She deals with burning issues of the disastrous impact of globalization on the Indian economy and the effects of urbanization on the domestic relations in Indian society. Her women protagonists normally go for complete surrender but the very essence of self-respect and self-reliance always remain with them that often results in forcing them to become rebellious. *Sudha Murty's* writings with subtle *autobiographical touches* are the embodiment of her lived experiences and her outlook formed out of such experiences. Her writing dominant with an unfailing humanism, a sense of social justice and motherly compassion, often takes the reader along to the author's approach to life.

In her novels, she plays a subtle feminist without having complaints about the opposite gender. Her novels '*Dollar Bahu*(2005), *Mahashweta* (2005), *Gently Falls The Bakula* (2008), *House of Cards* (2013), *The Mother I Never Knew* (2014) etc. bring out the facets of the author's life as a writer, a wife, a mother and a compassionate human being. As *Sudha Murty* herself declared in an interview, "*Her characters are her mental daughters who live with me for two three years go wherever I go and whom I bid goodbye after the work on the book is over.*" (*My Characters Are My Mental Daughters: Sudha Murty, August 30, 2010, /PTI, Bangalore.*

*Sudha Murty's* novel '*Dollar Bahu* (2005) is a story of a young couple *Chandru* and *Jamuna* who got a job in the USA' and migrated there with his wife, *Jamuna*. The mother-in-laws *Gouramma* was proud of her son and daughter in law because they were earning in dollars. Her second daughter in law *Vinuta* is subject to hatred just because she comes from a middle-class background. 'Nothing so surprising. My mother-in-law is greedy and stupid. My co-sister-in-law *Vinuta* is from a poor family and innocent about the ways of the world. My sis-in-law *Surabhi* does not have any brains. It is easy to manage such women.'(*Dollar Bahu* 128)

Ultimately, *Gouramma* gets completely disillusioned by her experiences with *Jamuna* in America as she did not respect her, neither did she treat her as a human being. It was fine, *Gouramma* replied crisply and stepped into the house. She had expected that *Jamuna* would welcome her by touching her feet, neatly dressed in a sari, wearing gold and diamond jewellery. She had carefully composed and rehearsed her blessing. But she was disappointed. (*Dollar Bahu* 83)

In her distress, insult and plight, she remembered her second daughter in law in America. The novel shows the ill effects of the dollar that makes a *emergence* on closely-knit human relations i.e. particularly a woman's vision of life.

*Mahashweta* (2007) is a story of courage and resilience shown by *Anupama*, a versatile actress who played a challenging role of *Mahashweta* in a play based on *Bana Bhatta's* novel '*Kadambari*'. *Dr. Anand* impressed by her melodious voice and her skills in stage acting proposes her for marriage despite the opposition from their families. Unfortunately, *Anupama* developed an incurable *Leukoderma* after *Dr. Anand's* departure to England.

*Anupama* constantly feared that something untoward would happen if *Anand* went abroad. *Anand* read her mind and said, 'Anu, don't worry. I'll count every hour, every minute and every second till you arrive.' (*Mahashweta* 38)

*Dr. Anand's* mother and sister cut him off from her by blackening her image secretly. When all her efforts to win back her *Dr. Anand* failed, she left her husband in a very situation of plight. Instead of losing her heart, *Anupama* shows heroic spirits to revolt and stands upright, to rebel against all her odds. She turned down her husband's request to come back to him.

"Could you give me the address of *Anupama*?" *Anand* asked the supervisor.

"Which Anupama?"

'The lady who directed the play today.'

"They have all left."

"Could you at least you give me her telephone number?"

The supervisor looked at him suspiciously. "Who are you? Why do you need her number? Mahashweta (143)

The novel makes an enchanting commentary on the life of a talented girl who compelled herself to get the *emergence* as a promising woman.

'*Gently Falls The Bakula*' (2008), features two neighbours *Shrikant and Shrimati* who fell in love irrespective of long-standing enmity between their parent's families.

'In our society, you marry not only an individual, but also his family. If I have understood them well, they will never accept you as a part of their family. They will never love you. (*Gently Falls the Bakula* 53)

Their early family life is good. *Shrikant* succeeds in winning the faith of his industrial owner and gets the promotion to the post of *Vice-Chairman* of the establishment. The new affluence feeds pride and arrogance that laid hidden in his mind. Gradually they fall apart from each other with *the plight* into the life of *Shrimati* to leave the house. She rebels and protests against all her odds. The bakula flower came to his mind. He thought how he had not seen any for a long time. Would he be able to buy some here? He wanted to tell *Shrimati* to get a few for him. An efficient, resourceful person like her would definitely find them. Once she took responsibility for a job, she made sure it was completed. (*Gently Falls the Bakula* 138)

The novel shows the diabolic transition on the man, the plight make the derogatory emergence on the woman and all human beings.

*Sudha Murty's* other novel '*House of Cards*' (2013) canvases the contrast between the rural and urban families moving apart resulting in a pathetic tragedy of its characters. The homes have lost their foundations in the mad rush for wealth and position.

Soon, *Mridula* and *Sanjay* settled into a comfortable routine. *Mridula* got up early in the morning, cooked and gave *Sanjay* breakfast. He carried a lunch dabba to the hospital and returned home at night. After *Sanjay* left, *Mridula* went to school; she cleaned the house in the evenings. She was left with no time for herself. If there was an emergency or night duty at the hospital, *Sanjay* stayed back there. (*House of Cards* 63)

The marriage of *Dr. Sanjay and Mridula* was a result of their honest love and affection for each other. Both of them helped each other to run the family, however, *Dr. Sanjay* treated her like a dustbin after he started earning a tremendous amount of money through unethical medical practices. Against all her odd situations she rebels and protests to get rid off from her suffocation.

Amma, stop it. This isn't a history class," *Sishir* replied.

*Mridula*, please stop. You don't know how to encourage the youngsters today and give them confidence. I don't know what you teach in your school,' *Sanjay* said.

"I teach my students to have equilibrium in both victory and defeat.' (*House of Cards* 196)

After the plight and the cruel expulsion of *Mridula*, the house they had constructed so carefully fell like a house of cards. Unethical money instead of bringing happiness, satisfaction in their life brings hatred and distress.

### **Conclusion:**

*Sudha Murty's* works have vast coverage of the situations with a bigger number of characters and their record of life is evidenced with authenticity. In each of her protagonists, she describes a

prototype, who faces a *transitional period* of life as successful individuals, floating all fears dilemmas, contradictions, taboos, frustration and long-suffering endurance. But sometimes the voice remained voiceless and suffocated behind the silence of every woman. This long silence makes a *transitional period* in her life by breaking it that creates a stir within her *to transit* out the womanhood. Their experiences of violence, denigration, exploitation and break-up are revealed in the travails of these women characters lives. The *realistic contexts, restricted mindsets, stereotyped judgments and stale expectations* are depicted by *Sudha Murty* in mixed incidents, different *scenarios and a large gallery* of characters with a wide range for a *transitional period*.

These women characters such as *Anupama, Mrudula, Shrimati* etc. have placed themselves with convention amidst social realities and problems. The cores in all these novels are formed by the man-woman relationship, social acceptance and estrangement in modern life. These women protagonists such as *Anupama, Shrimati and Mrudula* are very simple, hardworking and innocent throughout as the author explores the relationship in deeply. Whereas the male exploration such as *Sanjay, Shrikant and Anand* are strongly influenced by the power of luxury comfort and materialism steadily climbing up the corporate ladder without realizing the value of women. The family rival, the rift between in-laws relationship, misconception, lack of understanding, antiquated thoughts, holding male domination stands similar to a *transitional period* in all the novels taken for study. All these female characters have much-untapped potential but are left as doormat types. Here in these novels, the realization sets-in in the male inconsiderate characters like *Shrikant, Sanjay, and Anand*. They recognize their inaccuracies that the female characters have always been ignored, taken for granted and realize that 'care, partnership and responsibility are the key ingredients of a happy marriage, they see life from a different angle, away from their self-centric perspective.

Lastly the Indian Woman gets an emergence when she bursts out for the womanhood. Their experiences of violence, denigration, exploitation and break-up are revealed in the travails of these women characters lives. The *realistic contexts, restricted mindsets, stereotyped judgments and stale expectations* are depicted by *Sudha Murty* in mixed incidents, different *scenarios and a large gallery* of characters with a wide range for the plight, rebel and emergence of an Indian Woman in the novels.

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*Sudha Murty* eloquently demonstrated how a modern Indian Woman has come to understand that she is independent and not helpless in her plight. A woman can be now revolutionary to earn a living and is no longer restricted to domestic duties now she rebels. All these personalities of modern marriage are reflected in the Indian Women characters.

No longer can the protagonist, puts up her intolerance. She eventually rebels from the plight, to emerge as an Indian Woman in the novel to announce the fact that artificial values and material success cannot make a person successful. In the social-strata, the Indian Woman is just an embellishment, a flashy symbol defining 'His' social status. Every woman living a real-life will feel attached to the stories discussed above. The characters here gather courage and face new dawn i.e. get emergence through their plight and rebel against all the odds as shown in the novels of *Sudha Murty*.

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