



## THE TRADITIONAL BELIEF IN SUDHA MURTHY'S MAHASHWETA

**M. BALAMURUGAN**

Assistant Professor of English  
Edayathangudy G.S.Pillay Arts and Science  
& Science College Nagapattinam  
(TN) INDIA

**T. ABINAYA,**

M.A. II English,  
Edayathangudy G.S. Pillay Arts  
Science College, Nagapattinam.  
(TN) INDIA

### ABSTRACT

*Sudha Murthy, a renowned novelist, a short story writer both in Kannada and in English who was awarded Padma Shri for social work and education, R.K Narayan's award for literature. She was a Philanthropist. Even though, she belonged to a high class society and a chair person in Infosys Foundation, she has dedicated herself to the society to implement techno oriented facilities in teaching for most of the Government schools in Karnataka. She got best teacher award from Karnataka state Government. She also explores the needs of development and humanistic approaches to the people through her writings. Sudha Murthy work discuss about the societal problems and its impacts. Her work picturize the human belief and values. It has the essence of Indianess. They remind us the human values, plainness, importance of friendship, philanthropy, kindness etc. that are forgotten in today's society. Likewise, in this novel Mahashweta the author explores how the superstitious belief destroys a girl's life. This presentation is based on the traditional belief that changed the protagonist's track.*

**Key Words:** *Philanthropist, humanistic approaches, plainness.*

### INTRODUCTION

Sudha Murthy, an Indian Philanthropist and feminist writer in English and Kannada. She wrote about the sufferings of women both in family and in society. *Mahashweta* is one of the best novels of Sudha Murthy.

**M. BALAMURUGAN**

**T. ABINAYA**

1Page



Superstition is an excess belief and reverence for the supernatural. In India, many people believe in superstition. In the ancient period these superstition was introduced on the base of science. But, later it began to overrule the human kind. In this novel superstition plays a vital role. In this novel, if the disease Leukoderma was not taken into a serious note, everything would have been end in a happy way. In this novel, the protagonist, Anupama was affected by Leukoderma due to her life turns upside down.

Radhakka was an orthodox woman. She had a strong belief in superstition. When she had Aunupama's Horoscope, she checked it thoroughly with the help of a priest whether she is lucky, and how would be her married life. As there is no flaw she agreed half-hearted. She accepted her just for the sake of her son Anand and also for society so that her status will get high.

*'Narayana, do the horoscopes really match? How is the girl's horoscope?'*

*Avva, the horoscope match perfectly. The girl's horoscope is excellent'.*

*Anand is my only son. What about the children?*

*Oh, her horoscope shows only male children.*

*Of all the horoscope that had been matched with Anand's, so far this horoscope was the most compatible.(29)*

Even in this twenty first century, Indians have a great belief in superstition. The people thought, that whoever affected by disease were considered to be the cursed person. They treat as a bad omen for their family. The person who is affected by the disease is pushed into mental trauma. They are humiliated again and again by the people for the nature's cause. They are taunted by their own family members.

When, Anupama finds that she had developed a small white patch in her leg, she was shocked and as well as scared. She was afraid of Radhakka's reaction, because she knows that her in-laws would go to any extent. "A couple of a days later, she noticed something very odd. There was a small white patch on her foot where she had got burnt". (46)

So, she secretly consulted the Dermatologist and confirmed it was 'Leukoderma'. She was scared about her marriage life with Anand. Though, she knew it won't spread but Radhakka won't accept it. Because Radhakka had a strong belief in superstition and she also hated the people who suffer from 'Leukdrama'. When she came to know about it, Anupama was sure that she would be sent back to her maternal house. She won't allow Anu to stay in their house and that too with disease because everything for Radhakka should be perfect.



Radhakka's eyes accidentally fell on the board outside Dr.Rao's clinic. Radhakka was under the impression that those who visited dermatologists had venereal diseases. The very thought of those patients was distasteful to her. (51)

When Anupama fell from the stairs her legs are visible to them. They were shocked to see a white patch on her foot. As she rolled down in the staircase, she was hurt and fainted. No one came to her rescue. Instead of helping her they just stood still in their places and didn't show any humanity towards Anupama. Though they were relative, they didn't help her. The servants help her to gain conscious. "All of them stood staring at the white patches on her foot. Radhakka did not say anything. She looked as if the calamity had befallen them... Narayana said, Oh, this is a bad omen!" (53)

After that she was considered as a bad omen. When she gave flowers to the priest, he just throws away and asked her not to come inside the Pooja room, as it was an inauspicious to enter a room with curse. "Narayana said, 'don't come inside and pollute everything.' He took the flowers she had collected, threw them outside, and poured some water on the basket to purify it". (54)

She was not even called to dine with others. They stopped talking to her. She was sent to her maternal house. Until they know about her disease she was treated well and allowed to do all work. When they came to know she was abandoned. Radhakka just thought about their status and society, but did not show any humanity towards her. She was accused as characterless. Her dignity was destroyed. She was left with loneliness.

This superstitious belief has changed many lives as boon. And especially a person, who was affected by the disease like 'Leukoderma' was treated as a curse on the Earth. The person is left with no choice other than committing suicide. Until they knew about the disease, they treat them equally. When they came to know about the disease they began to avoid them. Even their family and friends avoid them because they believed that, the disease would spread. The love that exists between them would also disappear which is a necessary one to the affected. Hence, traditional belief makes the affected person to thought about the new style in the life and started to hatred the tradition.

Likewise when Anand comes to know about this disease he was shocked and stopped writing letters to her because it may cause his generation. Even though he was a doctor, and knowing that the disease is not hierarchy and it wouldn't spread, he abandoned her from his life. Out of his superstitious belief, a fear that she is cursed he was forced to forget his vows during their marriage. He just loved her physical beauty and not accepted her inner beauty.



Even in her maternal house she was not accepted. Her step mother feared that Anupama's disease would affect her daughter's marriage. Unfortunately, it happened. In this case her stepmother didn't think about Anupama's life. Instead, she also treated her as an ill omen. She became a burden for them.

We heard a rumour that your eldest daughter has Leukoderma and because of that her husband left her. We did not believe it and had come to see for ourselves. We know that it was not a rumour... and nobody accept this alliance. (68)

Then she moved towards Mumbai to overcome this humiliation. There starts a new way of life for Anupama. She worked as a Professor and not even cared about the disease. She was in peace after a long time.

## CONCLUSION

Through this novel, the author says that how the disease, superstition, affects the life of people. Even in this modern world people believe in superstition. Without having and showing humanity due to superstitious belief they are even ready to lose any relationship. In this prospective the traditional belief is highly eradicated the development of the society but the impact of traditional belief should ensure our humanistic approaches and the self development.

## REFERENCE

Murthy, Sudha. *Mahashweta*, Haryana: Penguin Books India. 2007.