

# Mahashweta by Sudha Murty as a representation of women's plight in India

Jyoti Digambar Sampale<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Meena Kadam<sup>2</sup>

Submitted: 02-Jan-2025 Revised: 10-Jan-2025 Accepted: 14-Feb-2025 Published: 28-Feb-2025

Manuscript ID:  
IJEWLPSIR-2025-020106



**Creative Commons (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0):**

This is an open access journal, and articles are distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International Public License, which allows others to remix, tweak, and build upon the work noncommercially, as long as appropriate credit is given and the new creations are licensed under the identical terms.

**DOI:**

[10.5281/zenodo.15622200](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15622200)

**DOI Link:**

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15622200>

Volume: 2

Issue: 1

Month: February 2025

E-ISSN: 3065-7873

<sup>1</sup> Asst. Prof. Dept. English, SHMU  
<sup>2</sup> Sambhaji College, Murud  
Email: - [sampale.jyoti@gmail.com](mailto:sampale.jyoti@gmail.com)

**How to cite this article:**

Sampale, J. D., & Kadam, M. (2025).

Mahashweta by Sudha Murty as a representation of women's plight in India. *International Journal of English and World Languages and Literature Paradigm Shift in International Research*, 2(1), 28–30.

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15622200>

**Address for correspondence:**

Jyoti Digambar Sampale, Asst. Prof.  
Dept. English, SHMU  
Email: - [sampale.jyoti@gmail.com](mailto:sampale.jyoti@gmail.com)

## Abstract

Mahashweta by Sudha Murty is a poignant story about a central character named Anupama. She is an educated woman suffering from leukoderma-a skin disease, for which she is rejected by her family and society, resulting in her trauma and endless struggle for life. Anupama's story stands as a metaphor for the oppression of women and the expectations placed on them to sustain themselves in Indian society. The novel is not only a personal journey of Anupama but also a literary mirror of Indian women's suffering in a patriarchal society. It is also a critique of the marginalization of women based on different factors. Through this novel, Sudha Murty focused on the social taboos, inner strength, and courage of Indian women. After a lot of turmoil, Anupama's resilience and assertion at the end is undoubtedly inspiring to all those women who go through the same kind of situations in their life. Murty's novels are not just fictitious stories but narratives based on real life situations weaving into fiction. Literature is a mirror of society and the writers like Murty attempt to showcase harsh reality of life through their works to enlighten society for the righteous actions. Although the condition of Indian women is progressed than before yet at some places the situation is same as before hence such reflective writings can bring a positive change in the mindsets of people.

**Keywords:** - Poignant, trauma, struggle, Patriarchial, leucoderma, oppression, marginalization, suffering etc.

## Introduction

Mahashweta, is a representation of the plight of Indian women focusing on how cultural and social issues intersect with gender inequality. Indian literature has always mirrored Indian society. Sudha Murthy is one of India's eminent writers who wrote novels as a medium to address social issues and discuss the everyday struggles of women realistically. Mahashweta represents of Indian women's plight which is evident from the following study.

## Research Methodology

The present research is analytical, interpretative and theoretical based on the primary data that is a literary work, Mahashweta by Sudha Murty. The purpose of this research is to showcase the real situation of Indian women as victims of patriarchy and enlighten the society to see women as human beings not just as women. Primary data used during this study is the text of Mahashweta and secondary sources are research papers, journals, reference works related to the topic. It is purely qualitative research.

## Leucoderma- A skin disease as a societal stigma-

In reality, Anupama's skin disease leukoderma is not a serious issue, but it is seen as a social failure. Her husband, Dr. Anand, being an educated person, could not understand her situation and abandoned her. This shows that even educated people are affected by social stigma. The emphasis on physical appearance over individual talent and skills is a thematic concern in this novel. Through this novel, Sudha Murthy critiques how social factors create gender differences, and raises her strong voice for women's autonomy.

### **Conditional nature of marriage-Threat to humanity**

Sudha Murthy reveals how, in Indian society, marital relationships are based on certain conditions. In Mahashweta, marriage is seen as a condition in which women can be easily discarded when they do not fit certain roles. This mentality of society is not good and must be changed to create better generations ahead.

Women are expected to be tolerant of oppression and suffer from obedience in this patriarchal society. Anupama suffers by the hand of her mother-in-law, who is the epitome of an oppressive woman. Anupama was hated due to her poverty and skin disease by her mother-in-law even none of her own fault. This is truly shameful to judge someone based on their economic situation or looks, but Anupama falls prey to the mindset of people who made her life full of struggle and plight.

Dr. Anand is representative of all Indian men who are emotionally immature and coward. One who accepts Anupama only in positive circumstances when circumstances go wrong, and he does not stand by Anupama. Anupama was alone in her struggle for life going through trying times, and sustaining life.

### **Anupama's journey of Feminist Awakening-Rebirth of protagonist**

In the latter part of the novel, a sudden shift can be seen and Anupama's plight changes into empowerment when she goes to Mumbai, finds employment, and becomes an independent woman she gets settled in that new city with the help of her friend. There too, she has to face many painful situations, yet she continues to stand for herself. She finally opposes the idea of her husband, who reenters her life with remorse. Finally she chooses dignity over dependency, and does not return to her husband. Anupama's final decision is radical, as she gives more importance to her self-respect, neglecting social validation.

### **Results-**

The result of the study can be seen as how Anupama, protagonist in the novel goes through tough situations yet she remains resilient and emerge as an independent woman. Women need to see at life cognitively and lead their life meaningfully instead of being just as victims of the societal norms. Society must change its outlook towards women positively and support them for the good of the family and nation.

### **Discussion-**

It cannot deny the fact that till today women are not treated well. True change can happen only when the mindsets of people will change and humanity will prosper. An empowered woman is the architect of society and nation so let the women empower and be the change makers.

### **Conclusion-**

Anupama is not just a protagonist of Mahashweta but she stands as a representative of all women who are insulted, judged, controlled, oppressed and silenced by patriarchal society. Today, Indian women are treated the same as before only the form and way of exploitation is changed, and it will continue until when men and women are considered as human beings, not only two distinct genders. The mindset of society may truly change this situation when women are considered.

### **Acknowledgement**

I am Jyoti Digambar Sampale, thankful to Dr. N.G. Yemekar, Prin. And Dr. V.G. Gore, HOD, Department of English, Shri Havagiswami Mahavidyalaya, Udgir for granting permission to carry out the work.

### **Financial support and sponsorship**

Nil.

### **Conflicts of Interest**

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper

### **References:**

- 1) Athira, Raj M. "Exploring Sudha Murthy's Mahashweta through a Feminist Lens." Asian Journal of English and Linguistics 4.1 2019.
- 2) Geeta Somjee (1989). Approaches to the Study of Problems of Women. Narrowing the Gender Gap. The Macmillan Press Ltd. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-19644-9\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-19644-9_1)

- 3) Jain, Gunjan. (2017), 'Significance of Marriage as Social Institution in Indian English Writings', The Proceedings of the International Conference on Recent Developments in Science, Technology, Humanities and Management, 28-29 April 2017.
- 4) Manjula, I. S. V. "Mass Media and Multi Media–The New Age Language Tools for those Voiceless Feminine." 2013.
- 5) Murty, Sudha. "Mahashweta". India: Penguin Books, 2007.
- 6) Rimah Saleh Alyahya (2019). The Social and Ethical Values in the Select Novels of Sudha Murthy. Pp667-673 <https://doi.org/10.18510/hssr.2019.728>
- 7) [https://www.worldwidejournals.com/indian-journal-of-applied-research-%28IJAR%29/recent\\_issues\\_pdf/2016/April/April\\_2016\\_1459504039\\_\\_171.pdf](https://www.worldwidejournals.com/indian-journal-of-applied-research-%28IJAR%29/recent_issues_pdf/2016/April/April_2016_1459504039__171.pdf)
- 8) Google and Wikipedia
- 9) <https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/237609.Wilma-Manikiller>
- 10) Prema, Ms S. "Dissemination of Social Awareness In Sudha Murty's Mahashweta: An Inexorable Oppression Of Anupama." Studies In Indian Place Names 40.41 (2020): 221-225.