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IDENTITY, CULTURE AND LANGUAGE IN THE NOVEL MAHASWETA BY SUDHA MURTY

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to prove how Identity, Culture and Language can bring consummate change in one's life. In this novel, through the protagonist Anupama writer expose the vulnerability of women and their inner power to re-bounce from obstacles. The protagonist Anupama underwent violent struggle in this novel. But at last she creates identity for herself by overcoming all the obstacles. This is an inspiring story of courage in the face of betrayal and disappointment. This inspiring story offers hope to those who suffer prejudice in society even today. Sudha Murty herself narrates the story in a simple realistic manner. Culture plays constant and indirect role in her novels. At the end of the novel author shows to the world that this novel will be an eye opener to the people who consider women only as a beautiful object that is being sold in the market rather than human beings.

Keywords: Identity, Culture and Language, Story, human beings etc

A successful woman is one who can build a firm foundation with the bricks others have thrown on her. The status and identity of women in India had changed over the past few million years. Culture which includes one's belief, customs and values, activities had changed human beings in this modern era. Language had become just as a communication process rather than expressing one's love. Identity plays important role in this modern era.

Sudha Murty was born in 1950 in Haveri district of North Karnataka. She did her M.Tech in Computer science and joined in Tata Engineering and Locomotive Company as a First Female Engineer. Now she is the chairperson of Infosys foundation. Her novels are, Dollar bahu, Gently

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falls on Bakula, House of Cards, Wise and Otherwise. She is well known in both Kannada and English languages. She acted in Marathi and Kannada movies. She got R.K.Narayan Award, Padmasri Award, C.R.Patil award, and Attimabbe Award. Most of her novels deal with women and their problems. Simplicity has always been a speciality of Sudha Murty's writings. In the simplest of the words she always conveys the message to lead a meaningful life.

This paper analysis the novel Mahashweta and shows how language, culture and identity plays significant role in one's life.

In this novel Mahashweta, the protagonist poor and beautiful Anupama met handsome and rich Anand. Both fell in love. Anand convinced his mother Radhakka to marry Anupama. When her father tries to convince her to marry Anand, she agrees to marry him. According to her, "Like Rohini to Chandra, like Lakshmi to Narayana, She is to him" (Murty 33) "The greatest jewel is my Anand, others weigh me down" (36). Here, writer had used rhetoric language to enrich both the characters love and the aesthetic sense of the people.

After two months Anand went to England for higher studies. But before going he convinced Anupama by saying, "Till death do us part" (38) "Anu, I am giving you my heart today, please keep it safe" (36). Poor Anupama trusted his words blindly. Later, she was asked to discontinue her studies saying that it was their culture. She instantly accepted this unwise culture and remained inside the luxury jail. Anupama started to feel like a stranger in her own house. The only comfort she derived was from Anand's calls and letters. She thought "If only I had wings, I'd fly away to him" (43).

During Lakshmi Pooja, a hot coal fell on Anupama's feet and small white patches started to appear. She confirmed with doctor that she has Leukoderma. But she did not reveal to anyone because of fear. One day Radhakka found the disease and asked her to go to her father's home. When Anupama's father tries to fall on Radhakka's feet, Anupama stops him by saying that she did not cheat anyone. Even in her toughest situation she maintained her rich culture, parents' dignity and respect. But, Radhakka failed in her culture.

She was rejected by her own family members. Words like "Bad omen and Rejected wife" (131) were uttered by her own family member. Because of Anupama, her step-sisters marriages were cancelled several times. She and her father wrote many letters to Anand. Anupama, wrote in her letter that, "Anand, please come and take me from this hell" (145) but received no reply. She realized that Anand alone held the key to her future. But Anand did not reply to any of their

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letters. As an Indian girl, to protect her culture, she didn't even spoke ill about their mother in law's family members.

Even her father started to feel bad about Anupama. She felt like a lonely traveller on a long and arduous road. When she tries to attempt suicide she thinks what people will say if she dies? No one is going to feel for her. Not even her own family members and her lovable Anand too. "In any community, land or race, a woman always wants her husband to love her"(144). But Anupama's husband loves his passion more than her love. Now, she realised the true Anand who loved her beauty instead of her. She understood that his words held no truth when he spoke to her. Our Indian culture says, married woman should not remove her mangalsuthra before the death of her husband. If one removes that, she was considered as a cultureless lady. In spite of knowing all these things, she removed her Mangalsuthra thinking why should she keep something which does not belong to her.

Recently in neya naanataalk show, a woman boldly admitted that she removed her mangalsuthra when she came to know the real face of her husband. There are more Anupama's in this world left alone by their husbands. Culture should protect women. Everyone respects and follow culture until it protects them. There's nothing wrong in going against culture if it doesn't protect people. With more courage and hope Anupama went to Bombay to lead a peaceful life suggested by her friend Sumithra.

Isn't it Anand's duty to send money for his wife's treatment? Isn't it father's responsibility to take care of his daughter? Sadly, everyone not only lost their culture but also humanity too. At present scenario people follow two types of culture namely rich and poor culture. If a rich person does anything against culture or any sinful act, people around them will not react or even question them. But, without any mistake poor people are judged or humiliated in front of the society. People thought, whatever rich does is right. Writer perfectly captured our current world in front the reader.

World says, change is the only thing that cannot be changed. Anupama liked to have some change in her life. She stays in Sumithra's house until she finds a job. She thought, God will provide for her and with the help of her education she will lead rest of her life. She does not want to be a burden to her friend. So, she accepts her job as a clerk. At this time, Sumithra's husband tries to misbehave to her. But she somehow manages to escape from his trick. Our culture asked us to treat guests like God.

Writer shows how our culture had been destroyed then and now. Even her husband left her she maintains her culture and tradition strictly unlike other people who are not satisfied with

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their good life. After sometime, she joined in college as a lecturer and went to her friend Dolly's house to stay. As a dutiful daughter she sends her hard earned money to her family who didn't even supported her during her hard times. Till now she hadn't raised her voice on anyone in any situation.

One day she met with an accident and Dr.Anand gave treatment to her. They both become friends. When Vasanth proposed to her she rejected. She is allowed to remarry. No one can stop her. But, she decided not to remarry again. The proverb once bitten is twice shy had been proved with her marriage decision. They both decided to be friends forever. Step by step she found her identity. Soon, she directed famous play with the help of her students in a famous Tata theatre and become famous throughout Bombay. Earlier she was identified as a daughter of poor school teacher and later by doctor's wife. But now, she found her own identity. The latter fake identity showed her what is real identity in one's life and gave purpose to live in this world.

At last, Anand realises his mistake when he came to know his mother's true colour. When he informed his mother about his sister's affair before her marriage, she behaved casually and advised him not to take this silly matter so seriously. He was totally flabbergasted. He compared his sister with Anupama and thought Anupama was culturally perfect and zero mistake lady though she comes from poor family. Eventually her sister who was brought up in rich environment had lost her culture. He thought Anupama was send back to her home without any mistake. Later he came to meet Anupama. Anand's repentance was sincere, but it was like the coming of the rains after the grass.

Anand tried to convince Anupama, to bring her back in his life. Till now Anupama remained silent, her language was silent and calm. But when he asked her asked her to re-join in his life, first time she put forth so many questions before him. She said, he cannot expect a burnt seed to grow into a tree and remained him that, "Saying the right thing at the right time is what makes a conversation meaningful" (146). She said that she was sent her back to her house by his mother because, his son will not like ugly toy. Anand become silent. Anupama continued to speak. "Love is not the commodity that you can buy after putting it to the test. It is not something that you can buy after consulting others. It is not sold in the market for money (6). She said evenin Bombay where even this mad rush, she found humane inside to it.

Hearing all these things again he requested her to come back into his life. But Anupama who follows culture teaches some basic culture before answering his questions.

"You were worried about your unborn daughters' future, i am also somebody's daughter; did you worry about my future? Had I known your attitude toward life, I would have told you to

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marry somebody else. Suppose you had got Leukoderma, do you think that I would have left you for some other man? A marriage is a lifelong commitment; for better or worse,till death do us part. Wasn't that what you said to me before you left for England? Even though you are a Doctor, you only know how to treat a disease, not tend to a patient's emotional needs(147).

At last she said , "We are not made for each other" (149). Anand went out silently.

In this novel Mahashweta,through the character Anupama writer clearly brought out how language, culture and identity plays significant role in one's life. Initially, Anupama was depressed and heartbroken .later when she realised the truthshe starts to stand on her. Throughout the novel she maintained her good culture, politeness in language and creates identity by toiling hard. This novel had brought great changes in the lives of the people especially those who were affected by Leukoderma. A real life incident story was written at the back of this novel. The story says about a man how he married the same Leukoderma affected girl whom he rejected after their engagement. A simple language, culture and identity can bring enormous change in one's life. This novel proves to be the best example.

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