

Cognitive Evaluation Theory Key to Exploration of New Woman in Sudha Murthi's *Mahashweta*

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Abstract-

Sudha Murthy is a brilliant yet down-to-earth writer in English and Kannada. She has delineated middle class Indian women's life with crystal clear narrative dealing with the psychology of the character. This paper is an attempt to relate the concepts of Cognitive Evaluation Theory to the struggle and triumph of highly motivated Anupama, protagonist of Mahashweta. Finally there is exploration of new woman who has found herself in the long journey of independent walks.

Key-words-Crystal clear narrative, Psychology of the character, Cognitive Evaluation Theory, Exploration of new woman.

Dr. Sudha Murthy, a multi-faceted personality, is a successful writer, social worker and a philanthropist who contributes to various charities in the capacity as the chairperson of Infosys Foundation. Dr. Sudha Murthy is the recipient of various awards for her contribution to the society. She has been bestowed with the 'Padma Shri' award by the Government of India in the year 2006 and the R. K. Narayan award in the year 2006 for her contribution in the field of literature.

Psychological realism has its place in literature since 21st century. It is the way in which the writers bring out the characters' internal thoughts and the feelings deeply. In such kind of writing it is notable that the writer brings out the mind of the character than the other novels. Dealing with the psychology of the main character there are number of inner monologues identified in the novel. For the long time there is an idea that exist not only in the real life but also in literature, reality is something what we see and spoken out by the people. But no one at many times discusses the inner feelings of any person which also consist of numerous realistic feelings within them.

Sudha Murthy, as one of the leading and successful women writers has the picture of realistic portrayal of the socio-psychological issue in her works. Her protagonists are portrayed as well educated women with the inherent inner power who

are ready to face the challenges under any circumstances and emerge successfully by carving a place for them in the society within the parameter of the Indian tradition. As the protagonists are charged with huge internal motivation out of the sufferings they undergo by the others, decides to lead life independently there -after.

These ideas can be related with the concept of Cognitive Evaluation Theory. It is a theory in Psychology put forward by Deci and Ryan. The theory explains the effects of external consequences on internal motivation. According to this theory there are two motivation systems: Intrinsic and Extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation involves doing something because its personally rewarding to you. Extrinsic motivation involves doing something because you want to earn a reward or avoid punishment. Both are powerful forces in shaping who we are and how we behave. In short Cognitive Evaluation Theory explains the effects of external consequences on internal motivation.

Let's relate these ideas to Sudha Murthy's novel *Mahashweta*. Sudha Murthy's novel *Mahashweta*, a powerful text tells the story of the female protagonist Anupama, who suffered from leucoderma after her marriage. This book portrays the inner strength of a woman who discovered herself in the best way she could, when no one was there to give her a helping hand. Not even her so called husband who was desperate to make her his own for the rest of his life, her in-laws and even her

own family with her. Anupama bring out the courage and fortitude of those women can exercise when the need arises, to be able to assert their rights and not always end their life when they faced discrimination in the society. Many women faced various kind of humiliation in our society. This novel not only provides the spirit of resurrection to the women but also an eye opener to those who humiliate the women in many ways. Sudha Murthy was succeeded in her effort.

Anupama, was a daughter of Shamanna, a village school teacher. She was a talented artist who performs a number of Sanskrit plays. Her ardent dedication, determination, ambition, self control, hard work, kindness etc. double her beauty. She never takes a break from her studies. She says to Sumitra, her dearest friend: "Sumi, If I don't work hard I will lose my Scholarship and that will be the end of my career". (20) Like other girls she wasn't happy that she is going to complete her post-graduation within four months. Though she was never far from Anand's thought, instead of indulged in marriage dreams, her mind focus on how to build up a good future and be a helping hand to her family.

Getting education is the fundamental human right of every individual irrespective of gender. Certain people believed girls and women were educated only for traditional household works and men will be the bread winner of a family. Anupama was aware of these social taboos, significance of education, above all her father's financial trouble; she was sure that Scholarship was the only way to fulfill her dreams and capable of bringing socio economic changes. Realizing the importance of women education: Economic development and prosperity, Economic empowerment, Improved life, Dignity and honor, Justice, Alleviate poverty, Choice to choose a profession of her choice etc., Anupama work hard. Women must be educated for a healthy and a happy life. An educated woman can be a better human being, successful mother and a responsible citizen. Educating women will definitely increase the living standard both in and outside home. An educated woman will force her kids to study further, wish them to live a better life than hers and respect the people who are educated.

Her beauty and simplicity mesmerized Anand at first glance in Dr. Desai's house. It prepared his mind and forced him to marry her even

when his mother had other plans for his marriage. The most significant characteristic feature of Anupama's nature was that she was constantly aware of her position in the world. Though she got married with a reputed doctor from a rich family, she never boasted of it to her friends and relatives. She always kept her foot down to earth. It saved her from contempt of her friends and relatives after her break up from Dr. Anand.

As a father, Shamanna think about only the secured life of Anupama and delighted when he received Anand's letter. Before completing her studies and fulfill her dreams, Anupama have to agree with marriage. She stepped into a new life with Anand in Lakshmi Nivas. Goddess Lakshmi is regarded as the goddess of wealth and prosperity. Radhakka showered Anupama with many expensive Sarees and ornaments. But Anupama said to herself, "To me the greatest jewel is my Anand. The rest only weigh me down" (36). Anupama was not attracted by the expensive materials, like a typical Indian wife she consider her husband equal to God and want to continue life as a wife not as an independent woman. Her mind throbs for her husband's love and care. Anupama, a girl longs for a good career now longs for a marital bliss. Though she was tasted the bitterness of poor economic status, she did not blind folded seeing Anand's wealth, for her his love was her greatest treasure.

When Anand went to England for his further studies on scholarship, Anupama had to remain home to perform Lakshmi pooja on Deepavali day as per Radhakka's wish. None consider her dreams or aspirations, while she was adjusting to her new environment and that was making her diffident and left behind her dreams. Anupama had lost contacts with the world outside Lakshmi Nivas since her marriage except a few ceremonies she attended on Radhakka's behalf. Later she began to realize that her only purpose was to be adorned and exhibited as an acquisition, reflection of their status in society.

For Anupama Deepavali is a day in which darkness spread in her life, with the discovery that she was affected by leukoderma. Leukoderma is a cutaneous condition with localized loss of pigmentation. It is largely a cosmetic problem. It is found to be neither infectious nor contagious. The exact loss of melanocytes cells causes the disease which is hard to cure. A small white patch ruined her

life. She even thinks of suicide but gathers courage and decides to live the life that God has given her.

Initially Anupama remains to be in the absolutely confused state but changes when she realized that her condition had become lower than the servant all of a sudden. The kind of isolation feeling filled her mind when she was not able to think beyond her family life. But at once when she becomes strong out of the adversities she faced during that chaotic situation in life she completely breaks the invisible borders that restricted her to be independent women so far. Rather than being pity on her situation, she wasn't welcomed anywhere in the home and abandoned by her uncaring in-laws and insensitive husband. People in society looked at her as a bad omen, she forced to return to her father's home in the village. None of her letters get any response from Anand, though he was a doctor who has medical knowledge of leukoderma. She had undergone psychological agony both from family and society due to the superstitious beliefs on leukoderma.

Anupama moves to Mumbai with the help of her friend and works as a lecturer. Anupama began her dramatic career as a performer, but her life experience makes her a good director. Once she says: "it is better to understand the vicissitudes of life and solve our own problems in the manner we find appropriate. I have learnt that repeated success makes a person arrogant, while occasional failures make an individual more mature". (116)

Meanwhile she met with an accident and meets Dr. Vasanth who also loves Literature and Arts just like her. Dr. Vasanth proposes to her and the reader expects that she will accept the genuine love of Vasanth but it doesn't happen. Even when Anand met Anupama with the sense of guilt to continue their married life as — "I will beg Anupama to forgive me. She is far superior to anyone I know in morals, intellect and conduct. With new found determination he got up". (128) But she makes her decision clear that their relationship is over — "Was it my fault that I got this white patch? Is it my fault that I am poor man's daughter? Now that you are here, answer me". (150)

The decision of Anupama not holding on to their married life is very well explained by her words

to the readers through her conversation with Anand as, — "How can you possibly expect a burnt seed to grow into a tree? Husband, children, affection, love... all are irrelevant to me now. It is too late for us. I am no longer the naive Anupama whose world revolved around you. I know what my goals are and where I am heading and I don't need anyone's help to reach my destination". (150)

It is notable through her rejection of Vasanth, that her level of motivation is at its peak in the end of the novel as she doesn't need any person's company in her life. According to the theory, the external events will impact intrinsic motivation for optimally challenging activities to the extent that they influence perceived competence, within the context of Self-Determination theory. As per the concept of the theory it is notable that the personal events differ in their qualitative aspects. Thus the certain events deemed internally controlling events experienced as pressure toward specific outcome. Therefore the theory could be related to the climax of the novel as Anupama becoming herself as a new woman excludes the idea of dependency. The determination found in the character of Anupama is absolutely the positive outcome out of the external suffering she had undergone in her life in the past.

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