



Leukoderma Patients in the Society with reference to *Mahashweta*

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Abstract

This Article focuses on the segment of Leukoderma disease which diagnosed Anupama the lead character in Sudha Murthy's prominent novel *Mahashweta*. Sudha Murthy is an Engineer and Professor who turned into a writer, activist and has written books that are women centered and also have focused on the societal issues that are been done towards women. Most of her novels are based during the timeline of 1970s – 1990s of India and gives us the view of pre 90's period of Indian rural and urban society. The cruelty towards the people who are diagnosed with such diseases has been portrayed with the reflection of the protagonist of the novel Anupama. The people with such disease are been excluded from various rituals in the society and the method of discrimination are been a part where diagnosed people aren't be able to get mingle with the fellow human beings. This disease is a genetically transmitted and doesn't spread from person to person, despite this the ill treating towards Anupama which lead to a mental pressure and also exclusion from in-law's house as well also not have been accepted back in her parental home too. This certain disease segment in this novel can have the detailed view point of how the patients diagnosed with Leukoderma are being treated or how they are been treated in the society through the rituals such as marriage, auspicious functions and societal judgments.

Keywords

Leukoderma, Culture, Rituals, Discrimination and Societal Judgments

Introduction

Indian Writing in English has become an extraordinary form of global recognition where we can see that with certain writers and their works it has started to get lots of attention towards various corners of our society. Sudha Murthy's *Mahashweta* is an exact example of it, where she has tried to bring up an expanded point of view towards women in the society. In recent days, where there is an increasing number of women writers, Sudha Murthy during 1980's created a phenomenon in India being a woman writer. This book *Mahashweta* shows us the involvement of a woman to bring up the reality and real life issues in the limelight.

Sudha Murthy – A True Feministic and a Social Figure

Sudha Murthy being a writer who has always focused on the women-centric topics and also regarding the societal issues which reflect women based on the various formats and the regular lives. Analyzing all her works we can see that she has focused on the protagonist which is female and has primary issues to be faced on that particular person's side, such as in her famous novel *Dollar Bahu* how the both daughter-in-law gets differentiated by their mother-in-law, in the name of their husband's work country, the Indian daughter-in-law has been degraded in comparison to the daughter-in-law of the United States. Similarly, in most of her books we can see her true form of a feminist figure and also a side of a social figure too. Her writings pen up a message towards justice and voice out of the women's society.

Leukoderma Patients in the Society with reference to *Mahashweta*

This paper deals with the real-life situation of the Leukoderma patients in our society which we saw a fictional form in *Mahashweta's* protagonist Anupama, who was also affected by the same disease called Leukoderma. Anupama is a sensitive woman who is a passionate and a responsible daughter and also a responsible wife termed character, thus reflecting the disease through her character was more meaningful and reasonable. Anupama being affected with this disease was a challenge for her to let out the truth in front of her in-laws first of all, as her mother-in-law Radhakka was an inflexible woman whose words were the final borderline inside the house, and in the same way she was also hesitating to share about this with her husband Dr. Anand. Here the outcome we can see is that she was having an inferiority complex within herself and also was struggling on it, how to deal with the society.

In the same way in account of the real-life Leukoderma patients, they are being discriminated in the society and especially in terms of women, they are being targeted and being subject out of the society very easily. On the other hand, sufferings of transgenders are also invisible in the society and is expressed through the article, "Communal Expectancy and the Authentic Self of Men and Transgenders - Arms and the Man by George Bernard Shaw and Birthday by Meredith Russo" the author Suganya et al. explains the emotional sufferings of men and transgender as,

“Restricting one’s emotions will lead to physical and psychological effects. Peer pressure and societal fear drags down the male victims from equity and impartial justice. A psychotherapist discloses “males have the added burden of facing a society that doesn’t believe rape can happen to them...at all” (Suganya et al. 882).

The main factor comes inside is the culture box, where there are lots of families i.e.; so called orthodox families looks for perfection in every possible way when it comes in terms of marriage, thus that is common thing in the part of being humans. So in the terms of being into perfection and have no mark policy, those patients grows inferiority complexes inside them which slowly kills them inside, same way how Anupama started to deal with it. To not her mother-in-law knows about it, she had to lie to her for visiting doctor when she was not at all aware that, whether was she having Vitiligo or not. From the moment she came to know about this she had to fight for herself against the society, which in the same case it shows that patients with the similar disease struggles a lot, in cost of their appearances in the public, answers to the society, attending cultural gathering, facing superstitious bullies, discriminations, mental illness occur, etc. ‘Radha, be careful. Do you know whether it is Leukoderma or Leprosy? It might be contagious,’ (Murty, 55)

Leukoderma is not a curable disease, in which Anupama was struggling to find a solution for her cure, as she was not aware of the disease before but later when she found out regarding the disease. Same way there is lot of patients who discovers about their disease and has no option to find out in terms of facing the society. This disease would have disturbed the character both mentally and physically. Here, food plays a major role in bringing her out from the crestfallen state. In the article, "Gender Performance on the Reinvigoration via Food", the author Suganya et al. describes “the action of offering food and having interpersonal communication helps in reducing the psychological distress of immigrants and increases interpersonal closeness” (Suganya et al. 887). They suffer from inside which the society never tries to understand or try to figure out what goes within their feelings. Certain people get discriminated even within their family too due to which they are unable to process out their treatment outside.

The main factor where it lies as a main concern is that about superstitious beliefs that has been created by humans, that people with certain disease cannot be present in any of family rituals or they are been cornered by the family members, stating that such kind of factors may bring bad omen or make auspicious ceremonies in wrong way. But this is not what actually means. People in our society became blind regarding certain disease, under which they are not looking the real and scientific factor properly. A false knowledge spreads like a wild fire, which means it can demotivate a person very badly.

The relationship aspects make the situation very badly, in the case of Anupama it led her to make herself separated from her own husband, who have abandoned after he got instructions from his own mother and that made him to get away from her, where she lost her only trust and hope that she had. In case of Dr. Anand, even he was a specialist doctor he couldn’t break the stereotype of her mother and there he became a hypocrite even

after he was such a qualified doctor. 'I do not know what to do. How will I tell Anand? Poor boy! He was deceived by her beauty.' (Murty 55) Referring to this situation of Anupama we can relate how in the real life there will be the situation of the other Vitiligo patients, how the world is towards them.

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