

EMERGING NARRATIVE TRENDS IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORKS OF SUDHA MURTHY AND ANITHA NAIR

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ABSTRACT

Sudha Murthy, an esteemed figure in Indian literature, has left an indelible mark on contemporary Indian literary discourse by addressing pertinent social issues and cultural nuances in her writings. Renowned for her sensitive and insightful writing style, Murthy possesses a deep comprehension of the complexities inherent in Indian society. In notable works like "Mahashweta," she casts a spotlight on issues of discrimination and social stratification in India, amplifying the voices of marginalized communities. Through her literary endeavors, Murthy encourages readers to engage in introspection regarding societal concerns such as gender disparity, child marriage, and the juxtaposition of tradition and modernity. Murthy's narrative tapestry is richly woven with elements of mythology, folklore, and the enduring essence of Indian culture. Her empathetic portrayal of characters grappling with societal constraints underscores her ability to capture the complexities inherent in Indian society. This research paper delves into the significant contribution of Sudha Murthy to contemporary Indian literature, focusing specifically on her adept fusion of mythology and modernity. Anita Nair's novels mainly deal with the experiences of the women protagonists, who face traumatic situations in their family life. Subjugation of women in the predominantly patriarchal family life in India, female infanticide, prostitution, lesbianism and rape are the issues she has projected in her fiction. Her fiction mainly presents the ethos of the middle-class Indian life. The men and women in her fiction are influenced by the modernity, but at the same time they appear to be unable to disentangle themselves from the traditional way of life and the social customs. Anita Nair is able to deal with this dilemma, especially faced by female characters, as she herself hails from a middle-class family

Keywords: *Sudha Murthy, contemporary Indian literature, Murthy's narrative tapestry, mythology, Anita Nair's novels*

INTRODUCTION

Sudha Murthy, a prominent Indian English writer, assumes a significant position in this literary landscape. Her works, spanning novels and short stories, delve into the challenges faced by women in a male dominated, tradition-bound society. While she does not explicitly identify as a feminist writer, her central characters typically embody educated, intelligent, middle-class, urban women familiar with contemporary thoughts and trends. These characters grapple with the challenges, concerns, and choices of educated urban women, navigating the delicate balance between Western thought and traditional conditioning. Murthy's protagonists, although assertive, are not radically militant; instead, they resist societal wrongs within culturally determined spaces, striving to gain their identities while challenging prevailing norms. Jyothi Ramesh Pai in the article "Empowerment through Values in the selected works of Sudha Murthy" writes, "The books of Sudha Murthy are filled with messages of human values like patience, love, attitude towards money and hard work, which motivate one to think, promote and generate awareness about human ethics acknowledging the social and political role in the Indian culture. Sudha Murthy's novels emerge as poignant narratives that not only mirror the societal complexities of the nation but also serve as a compelling lens through which the struggles of Indian women within closed societies are vividly portrayed. This paper embarks on a journey into the literary realms crafted by Sudha Murthy, with a specific focus on her novels "Mahasweta" and "House of Cards." Through an exploration of the profound challenges

faced by Indian women ensnared within the oppressive mechanisms of closed societies, we aim to unravel the multifaceted layers of their experiences. Sudha Murthy's narratives serve as a resonant echo, capturing the poignant struggle of women seeking dignity amidst societal constraints. Anita Nair does not claim to be a feminist, but all her novels are predominantly concerned with feminist perspective in delineating the life and struggle of the female protagonists in her fiction. Anita Nair's feminist preoccupations are seen in the presentation of her female characters. They are not only aware of their individuality, but they also effectively express it in their life presented by the writer in her fiction. In *Ladies Coupe*, for instance, Margaret Shanti, a chemistry teacher, asserts her individuality by taming her husband, who tries to thwart her and emotionally dominates her. Similarly, Marikolanthu in this novel faces injustice even at the hands of her parents, who would not spend on her education because boys of the family must be given priority for education. And then, she is victimized by the landlord, and sexually exploited as she belongs to the lower strata of the society. Anita Nair shows through the example of Akhila, how there are anti-feminist practices and attitudes deeply impregnated in the minds of men as well as women. Akhila's mother would feed her husband first and then others would eat. Akhila, as illustrated in the earlier part, is the earning member of the family, but she is not the decision maker.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mr. Nilesh Samadhan Guruchal (2025) Sudha Murthy, an eminent Indian author, has captivated readers with her simple yet profound storytelling. Her novels, written in English, often depict themes of social consciousness, family values, and human relationships. Murthy's writing is known for its accessibility, allowing a broad spectrum of readers to connect with her characters and narratives. Her works are deeply rooted in Indian culture, yet they transcend geographical and societal boundaries, making them universally relatable. Her storytelling is characterized by its sincerity and depth, weaving together elements of realism and fiction to highlight pressing societal issues. By focusing on ordinary individuals and their struggles, Murthy effectively portrays the complexities of human relationships and social structures. Her characters, often inspired by real-life experiences, reflect the everyday triumphs and tribulations faced by people across different walks of life. Through her literature, she not only entertains but also educates and inspires readers, encouraging them to reflect on moral and ethical dilemmas. It examines how Murthy integrates diverse perspectives through the use of first-person and third-person narratives, episodic storytelling, and character-driven plots.

Mohammed Zainab (2024) This Study explores the empowering narratives of Indian women as portrayed in Sudha Murthy's novels, particularly "Mahasweta" and "House of Cards." Focusing on the struggle against the oppressive mechanisms within closed societies, the research paper highlights the pervasive challenges faced by women in various facets of life, including employment, healthcare, and property rights, illustrating the distant dream of women's empowerment in India. The narratives within Sudha Murthy's novels vividly expose the violence, denigration, and exploitation endured by female characters, reflecting the broader global issues of violence, discrimination, inequality, and poverty faced by women and girls worldwide. Acknowledging the foundational role played by women in society, the paper

emphasizes the glaring disparity between their contributions and the realization of their true positions in life. Beyond merely depicting the oppression, this paper adopts an innovative approach by unraveling the resilient tapestry woven by the female protagonists as they navigate the constraints imposed by closed societal norms. Furthermore, the research underscores the need for awareness and advocacy, envisioning a robust women's movement empowered to challenge patriarchal norms, address root causes of inequality, and assert the full spectrum of women's rights.

K. Nesapriya (2024) Anita Nair, a renowned contemporary writer of this modern era has written several novels with great sensitivity and creativity. As a writer she is well aware of the facts and issues of the society that grip life in general. The hunt for liberty and its leading to self-discovery is the central theme spread in the novels of Anita Nair. The quest for freedom makes women stand away from mythological and limited stereotypes. Being a woman, the novelist makes her women characters take up centre-position in the novels, and she sprinkles the feminist attitude everywhere. Since their rules are typically associated with real women in life, the feelings of these women protagonists are sure to cope with their struggle to get their identity in real life too. She represents women's struggle on the one hand and self-expression on the other. In her view, only liberty and peaceful survival in the community help to know one's identity. She stimulates a sense of self-realisation in her characters. Anita Nair strongly hopes that self-realisation is the exact direction for obtaining selfhood.

Randhir Kumar (2023) Feminism is by no means a monolithic term at all. When one looks for a specific strand in a number of its variations, it is the critique of patriarchal thought that aims at male dominance and female subordination. This patriarchal ideology teaches women to internalize this concept in a process of socialization. In the wake of feminist movement in India, themes such as women's quest for identity, search for self-hood, relocation of self and consciousness to achieve a balance between tradition and modernity became popular in postcolonial Indian English fiction by both male and female writers. Anita Nair is one of the contemporary writers of India in the 21st Century. Her novels mainly focus on the pathetic lives of women who wriggle in the hands of men. Her works are based on purely Indian background. She has shown the subordinate position of women in the traditional bound Indian society. The existing norms in this society are the hindrances for the rights of women and sideline their existence as human beings.

Ku Priyanka (2022) Sudha Murthy is a famous Indian writer who writes in English. In her novels and short stories, she writes about the problems women face in a society ruled by men and bound by tradition. The paper talks about how Sudha Murthy's women struggle in a closed society and how "Mahasweta" and "House of Cards" show this. Women in every part of the country struggle to live with honour. There are problems for women in every area of life, including work, health care, and property rights. So the empowerment of women in India is still a long way off. This paper shows how the women in Sudha Murthy's books have to deal with violence, insults, and being used. Women and girls all over the world continue to face violence, discrimination, inequality, and poverty. They have built society from the ground up, but they still don't have the position they deserve. In reality, women and girls can't even get their basic rights. This research paper would help bring attention to a strong and active women's

movement made up of women who have the power to change patriarchal norms, tackle the root causes of inequality, and fight for all of their rights.

Modernity in Sudha Murty's Works

Sudha Murty's literary landscape is a rich tapestry that not only draws inspiration from the depths of Indian mythology but also intricately weaves threads of modernity into its fabric. Her works serve as a reflection of contemporary Indian society, addressing a spectrum of social, cultural, and technological issues with sensitivity and insight. A nuanced exploration reveals how Sudha Murty seamlessly integrates modern elements into her narratives, offering readers a glimpse into the ever-evolving dynamics of the world around us. In her novel "Dollar Bahu," Sudha Murty delves into the theme of globalization and its impact on familial relationships. Through the lens of a cross-cultural marriage, she navigates the complexities arising from modern aspirations, economic shifts, and the clash between traditional values and the pursuit of material success. The narrative unfolds as a poignant exploration of the tensions between generations and the changing dynamics within families in the wake of globalized influences. Sudha Murty also demonstrates a keen awareness of contemporary social issues in works such as "Mahashweta," where she addresses the stigma associated with vitiligo. The novel not only highlights the challenges faced by individuals with the condition but also underscores the need for societal acceptance and empathy.

Impact on Contemporary Indian Literature

Sudha Murty has exerted a significant influence on contemporary Indian literature, particularly within the domain of children's literature. Her writings resonate with audiences across ages, presenting compelling narratives that explore themes such as compassion, kindness, friendship, and societal concerns in a manner accessible to children. Through her storytelling, Murty endeavors to foster critical thinking, empathy, and a sense of social responsibility among young readers. where she delves into the intricate fabric of Indian societal structures, addressing issues of discrimination, social hierarchies, and the quest for identity amidst the interplay of traditional values and contemporary influences. Murty's literary contributions extend beyond children's literature, encompassing a diverse array of social issues, cultural nuances, familial dynamics, and feminist discourse within Indian society. In summary, Sudha Murty's impact on contemporary Indian literature is profound, characterized by her adept exploration of social issues, promotion of empathy and social awareness, and creation of relatable characters that challenge established norms, thus solidifying her reputation as a transformative storyteller in India who sheds light on marginalized voices and inspires readers to contemplate pertinent issues shaping Indian society.

Contradictions And Ambitions Of Anita Nair's Women's Character

Anita Nair is a bold and straightforward writer. Anita Nair refuses to be labelled as a feminist writer. She makes an attempt to show the quality of strength in a woman. Anita Nair also adds that strength is not usually considered a woman as thing. Her styles ultimately differ from other feminist writers. In other words, she is a feminist with difference. She traces the real position of women in the families as well as in the society. She has created ripples in the society of male domination by taking women as women in a serious manner. Her attempt to exhibit the plight, fears, dilemmas, contradictions and ambitions of her women's character is remarkable. Her

primary focus of attention is the world of women, the struggle of women in the context of modern Indian society. Her novels depict the real life of her characters. Her novels reveal the effect of social conditioning on women. Society uses many different means to propagate belief we have literature as one of the means to carry these ideas further, surrounded by such messages. They break the chains of social norms and do not confine themselves to the boundaries which limit women. So we can say that Anita Nair breaks the chains of society in portraying her women characters, which usually leads to its fragmentation.

Narrative Technique in Sudha Murthy's Writings

The way the story and the events are depicted is called the technique of narration. A writer by use of 'first person narration' tells his story. In this, the character narrates the events and incidents of his life himself. "First person storytelling typically uses the method of recollection to recall one's past. Sometimes writer creates a narrator who unfolds the action through its eye. The writer makes use of this strategy to keep his distance from the characters. The third form of narrative strategy is the author himself takes the reigns of the work's action into his hands. Most authors adopt this technique. a technique called 'Streams Of Consciousness' evolved. M. H. Abrams describes Stream of Consciousness as "Stream of Consciousness is the name for a special mode of narration that undertakes to reproduce, without a narrator's intervention the full spectrum and the continuous flow of a character's mental process, in which sense perceptions mingle with conscious and half-conscious thoughts, memories, expectations, feelings and random associations. One of the remarkable highlights of good composing is its capability to constrain readers to the story. It isn't the author alone who composes. "The readers who are the audience are equivalent stake holders in the arrangement of the content. Allegorical passing of a creator implies the introduction of readers in the imaginative demonstration.

The Treatment of Feministic Issues in Anita Nair's Novels

Anita Nair's fourth novel Lessons in Forgetting is discussed to redefine the role and the quest of women to move on life. Her writing reveals a story about real people, about second chances and fresh beginning. It deals with love, dependency and betrayal. Anita Nair in her fiction talks about how woman suffers from patriarchal system which has tried in many ways to repress, humiliate and abuse women. The question she raises in the novel makes us to rethink about the ideological ground of man's patriarchal role in the traditional society and to think about the existence of alternative reality. It presents an opposition between ideological appearance represented in mythic and metaphysical understanding of the material world and reality represented in the material oppression of women.

METHODOLOGY

There is an unlimited treasure trove of writing by Sudha Murthy And Anitha Nair women relevant to the last two chapters that has not even been touched upon and this is only the tip of the iceberg. Not only can more research be done on the image of the woman portrayed by the _organic 'intellectual, even research dealing with the relevance of western feminism to the Indian situation must be explored at greater length. The research methodology employed in this study aims for a comprehensive examination of the portrayal of Indian women within closed societies in Sudha Murthy's novels, "Mahasweta" and "House of Cards." Utilizing a variety of approaches, including literary analysis, interdisciplinary perspectives, comparative

analysis, case studies, content analysis, interviews, surveys, historical contextualization, ethical considerations, and peer review, this methodology seeks to provide a thorough investigation into the subject matter. The primary focus is on literary analysis, where a detailed examination of the novels aims to uncover the nuances of Sudha Murthy's portrayal of Indian women. This involves identifying key themes, character dynamics, and narrative structures to understand the societal constraints and evolving roles of women within closed societies. An interdisciplinary lens is applied by integrating insights from sociology and gender studies. This approach broadens the contextualization of the challenges faced by Indian women, applying relevant sociological theories to the analysis and grounding their experiences within societal frameworks.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In Sudha Murthy's literary canvas, a powerful archetype of the contemporary Indian woman emerges, poised at the intersection of tradition and modernity. This new woman, characteristic of the third phase in the evolution of feminine tradition, seeks a harmonious synthesis of age-old customs with progressive values. Rather than discarding societal norms, she navigates their limitations with an acute awareness of their essentiality for survival. In stark contrast to Western liberated counterparts, these Indian women cultivate a profound inner strength that propels them forward, effecting positive changes within their societal spheres. The contributions of women writers, a notable force in the evolution of English novels, have been particularly transformative. Their feminine sensibility, transcending the external world, has carved a unique space in Indian English fiction, crafting narratives populated by extraordinary, sensitive beings. This shift from external to internal exploration underscores the profound impact of these women writers in redefining literary landscapes. Post-colonial Indian English fiction portrays a distinct breed of women – conscious individuals engaged in a protracted struggle for individuality and human rights. This depiction serves as a poignant commentary on the enduring societal silence shrouding women's suffering, juxtaposed against the glorification of upholding traditional Indian cultural values. The conventional roles imposed on women – as mothers, wives, sisters, or daughters – have historically confined them to mere cogs in the family machinery. Their aspirations for identity and self-fulfillment have been stifled in the oppressive embrace of a maledominated, patriarchal society. This narrative unfolds against a backdrop where women, novelists writing in English during the postcolonial period, assume lead roles. These literary trailblazers offer a fresh portrayal of women, challenging traditional images prevalent in family and society. The gradual emergence of women in new forms mirrors the evolution of thought, ushering in transformative ideas that redefine the role and status of women. Sudha Murthy's literary realm serves as a powerful commentary on the empowerment of Indian women within subversive realms. It paints a nuanced picture of women grappling with societal expectations, breaking the silence around their struggles, and redefining their roles in a patriarchal milieu. The narratives transcend mere storytelling, becoming a testament to the strength, resilience, and empowerment inherent in the diverse experiences of Indian women.

The study of Anita Nair's literary patterns reveals a remarkable versatility and depth in her writing across diverse genres. As an accomplished Indian novelist, Nair demonstrates a mastery

of various styles evident in her extensive body of work, including crime fiction, historical novels, poetry, children's literature, and essays. Notably, her novel stands out as a compelling exploration of the societal challenges faced by women in a male-dominated environment. The narrative of this work is characterized by insight, solidarity, and humor, showcasing Nair's ability to vividly depict women's conditions. Nair employs a unique storytelling structure, intertwining multiple perspectives and timelines to explore the complexities of memory and forgiveness. This innovative approach to narrative construction underscores the depth of her understanding of human experiences. Her writing style is characterized by a blend of wit, empathy, and a keen awareness of societal nuances, as evident in her foray into crime fiction and children's literature with Nair's contributions to poetry, essays, and travelogues further underscore her multifaceted literary talent. Anita Nair's stylistic features, as revealed in the study, create a rich tapestry of genres and themes that reflect her versatility and deep understanding of human experiences. The chosen novels showcase her adeptness in addressing societal issues, exploring historical landscapes, and delving into the intricacies of memory and forgiveness. The global resonance of her works emphasizes the universal appeal of her storytelling, and her unique narrative techniques contribute to the enduring impact of her literary oeuvre. The comprehensive study of Anita Nair's literary patterns offers valuable insights into the remarkable diversity and depth of her writing across various genres. The findings highlight Nair's versatility as an accomplished Indian novelist, showcasing her ability to navigate crime fiction, historical narratives, poetry, children's literature, and essays with equal finesse. The thematic analysis of selected works, such as "Ladies Coupé" and "The Better Man," reveals a consistent thread of addressing societal challenges, particularly those faced by women in male-dominated environments. This thematic exploration is marked by a narrative imbued with insight, solidarity, and humor, demonstrating Nair's skill in portraying the complexities of women's conditions.

CONCLUSION

Sudha Murty's commitment to philanthropy and social causes demonstrates the interconnectedness of literature and real-world activism. The accessibility of her narratives has also played a pivotal role in broadening the readership base for Indian literature, fostering a love for storytelling among diverse audiences. In essence, Sudha Murty's impact on contemporary Indian literature lies not only in the stories she tells but in the broader implications of her narrative choices. Sudha Murty's legacy is one that extends beyond the confines of the page, resonating in the hearts and minds of readers who find in her works a mirror reflecting the complexities and beauty of contemporary Indian life. Digital humanities opens up avenues for collaborative analysis and interpretation of Nair's novels. Researchers from diverse disciplines, such as literature, sociology, and computer science, can pool their expertise. This interdisciplinary approach encourages a more holistic understanding of Nair's work and its significance in contemporary literature. The use of digital tools and methodologies may present challenges in analyzing Nair's novels. Additionally, ethical considerations



surrounding data privacy and access must be carefully addressed. Anita Nair's novels offer a rich landscape for exploration through the lens of digital humanities. The application of digital tools and methodologies enables a deeper analysis of Nair's themes, characters, and narrative structures. By leveraging the possibilities of digital humanities, researchers can enhance their understanding of Nair's work and contribute to broader debates in contemporary literature

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