



WOMAN AND MARRIAGE IN SUDHA MURTY'S GENTLY FALLS ON BAKULA

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Abstract

Sudha Murty's novel "Gently Falls the Bakula" intricately explores the themes of womanhood and marriage through the narrative of Shrimati, the protagonist. Set against the backdrop of Indian society, the novel delves into the complexities of gender roles, societal expectations, and personal aspirations. Shrimati, a bright and ambitious young woman, finds herself entangled in the dynamics of marriage with Shrikant, her college sweetheart. As Shrikant prioritizes his career over their relationship, Shrimati willingly sacrifices her own dreams to support him, embodying the traditional role of a devoted wife. Through Shrimati's journey, Murty sheds light on the dilemmas faced by many women who navigate the intersection of personal fulfillment and societal obligations within the institution of marriage. This section aims to provide insights into Murty's exploration of womanhood and marriage in "Gently Falls the Bakula," highlighting the protagonist's struggles, sacrifices, and ultimately, her quest for self-discovery and empowerment.

Key words- Woman, Marriage, sacrifice, struggles etc.

"Gently Falls the Bakula" is a novel written by Sudha Murty, an Indian author, and philanthropist. The story revolves around the life of Shrimati, a bright and ambitious young woman who aspires to pursue higher education and build a career in the field of science. However, societal expectations and familial pressures lead her to sacrifice her dreams for the sake of marriage.

In the novel, Sudha Murty explores the theme of womanhood and marriage through the character of Shrimati. Shrimati's marriage to Ramanath, a man who is less educated than her but financially stable, becomes the turning point in her life. Despite her initial reluctance, Shrimati agrees to marry Ramanath, believing that she can still pursue her dreams alongside being a dutiful wife. "A house is made up of four walls. But a home is where

there is love, affection and a meaningful relationship. When that was not there it was only a house and the best thing was to get out of it." (p.no.152)

When Shrimati learns that their tastes, passions, and perspectives are different, her sorrow is as profound as the ocean. Rather than choosing Shrikant as her destiny, she now chooses history. Shrimati clarifies in this way, "Shri, I loved history and I loved you. In fact, once upon a time I loved you more than history. But when you lost your finer sentiments, chasing the success in the world of business, I was left alone with nothing other than history...you knew your goal. Now, I am also clear about my goal and I want to achieve it." (p.no.162)

However, as time passes, Shrimati realizes that her dreams take a backseat to her responsibilities as a wife and mother. She finds herself trapped in the roles society has assigned to her, unable to pursue her passion for academics and scientific research. The Bakula tree, a symbol of love and sacrifice, becomes a poignant metaphor for Shrimati's life as it wilts away, mirroring her unfulfilled dreams and aspirations. Through Shrimati's journey, Sudha Murty highlights the societal expectations placed on women in traditional Indian society. The novel portrays the struggles and sacrifices women often make in the pursuit of fulfilling societal norms and familial obligations, even at the cost of their own happiness and personal fulfillment. Dr. S. k. Pushpalatha (2016), "Rejection leads to Revolution of the protagonist in Sudha Murthy's *Gently Falls the Bakula*". Ultimately, "*Gently Falls the Bakula*" prompts readers to reflect on the choices women face in a patriarchal society and the importance of pursuing one's passions and dreams, even in the face of societal pressure and expectations.

"Sudha Murty's *Gently Falls the Bakula*" is a novel that delves into the complexities of marriage, relationships, and the pursuit of one's

dreams. The story revolves around the lives of two characters, Shrikant and Shrimati, who are married to each other. Shrikant is ambitious and driven by material success, while Shrimati is more inclined towards academics and literature. "You have an obligation to your wife. If you do not fulfill it. I will not stay in this house" (*Gently Falls the Bakula* p.142)

The novel portrays the traditional roles expected of women in Indian society, where Shrimati sacrifices her own aspirations to support her husband's career and raise a family. However, as the story progresses, Shrimati's sacrifices begin to take a toll on her, and she feels unfulfilled and unappreciated. Sudha Murty says that "usually, people who are sensitive need more time to understand the real world." Through Shrimati's character, Murty highlights the challenges faced by many women who suppress their own desires and aspirations for the sake of their families. Shrimati's journey serves as a reflection of the broader societal expectations placed on women to prioritize their roles as wives and mothers over their individual dreams and ambitions.

Ultimately, "*Gently Falls the Bakula*" raises important questions about the role of women in marriage and society, the pursuit of personal fulfillment, and the importance of following one's passions and dreams. Murty's portrayal of Shrimati's struggles resonates with many readers, shedding light on the complexities of gender dynamics and societal expectations in contemporary India.

"*Gently Falls the Bakula*" is a novel by Sudha Murty that explores the themes of love, marriage, and the pursuit of one's dreams. The story revolves around Shrikant and Shrimati, two bright students who meet in college. Shrimati, a dedicated and ambitious student, falls in love with Shrikant, who is more focused on his studies and future career.

As their relationship progresses, Shrikant becomes absorbed in his career,

eventually sacrificing his personal life for professional success. Shrimati, on the other hand, chooses to support Shrikant and put her own dreams on hold. She becomes a devoted wife, sacrificing her own ambitions and desires for the sake of her husband's career.

The novel raises questions about the role of women in marriage and society, highlighting the sacrifices many women make to support their husbands and families. Shrimati's character symbolizes the struggles and challenges faced by many women who find themselves torn between personal aspirations and societal expectations. Through Shrimati's journey, Sudha Murthy portrays the complexities of marriage and the importance of mutual respect, understanding, and compromise in a relationship. The novel serves as a reflection on the choices individuals make in pursuit of their dreams and the consequences of those choices on their personal lives and relationships.

Indian novels present a very different image of the feminine as a subservient auxiliary to her male counterparts in society. Numerous female writers have surfaced, bringing fresh subjects to Indian fiction and concentrating especially on challenges impacting women. One of the most significant Indian women novelists writing in the English language now is Sudha Murthy. In *Gently Falls the Bakula*, Sudha Murthy crafts the heroine, Shrimati, from an intelligent, well-educated, and compassionate middle-class household. In this piece, Sudha Murthy portrays Shrimati, the resilient woman at the centre of the narrative, as a victim of her husband's tenacity and how her muffled voice has emerged to express its concern. "Every dinner, every conversation, every relationship was based on profit and loss. What a way to live, she (Shrimati) had thought!"

Shrimati learns that their love, affection, and open communication of goals and ideas have diminished over time. Things that used to intrigue her start to lose their appeal to her. 'I am

quite upset at meeting individuals like you and wasting my time,' Shrimati was tempted to say while meeting guests... 'I am happy to meet you,' she added with a fake smile.

Conclusion

As Sudha Murthy notes, trust is essential to a married relationship. Male characters in her works are shown to be unreliable, egotistical, domineering, and to take women for granted. The female protagonists in each of these three stories experience insults, are used as a means of dowry, and are degraded.

This paper claims that women should be granted equal rights and opportunities, as they are capable of accepting anything, but they are not prepared to endure their husband's ignorance and lack of belief. Society should not be patriarchal in order to control women. Women are free to pursue their own dreams and have happy lives.

Sick of being treated like a slave and ignorant, Shrimati quits Shrikant to enrol in a PhD programme and live a free life. Every woman has the right to live her own life. Women shouldn't be forced to remain with their dishonest husbands, suffer endlessly, and act like puppets. Women ought to be allowed to live their lives as they choose. Divorce does not occur in Sudha Murthy's writings since it is a means of remarriage.

However, her works depict a troubled marriage.

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