



SUDHA MURTY

# Beauty In The Self

The identity of a woman is the sole factor on the basis of which the lives of several thrive. In today's generation and that too in a society, for a women, Education, outward appearance, the job and the salary they earn determine the chances of her getting betrothed and leading a comfortable life. Hardly does one come across people, who accept one with their flaws and embrace the way they are. Physical appearance in terms of their skin color, how fat or thin they are have for long dominated the minds of not just women but also of the whole world. Mahasweta, penned by philanthropist cum author Sudha Murty, highlights the plight of the protagonist Anupama, who suffers from leukoderma and how she struggles to find herself amidst the atrocities poured on her by the society, forms the highlight of the story.

Physical beauty. Who does not wish to have? Being blessed with physical beauty is nothing but a blessing, but if one goes into the philosophical aspect, one would definitely realize that the outer beauty deteriorates with the passage of time and what never fades away is our inner self. Anupama, a young girl blessed with beauty and brains where she is an accomplished theatre actress, classical singer and an all-rounder student, she finds herself getting attracted to a young Doctor named Anand, where apart from his handsome looks, what makes her fall weak on her knees is his charm and his talks, where he wins not just her trust and friendship, but also her love. The turning point of this novel lies in the events that take place after her marriage, when her stay with her in-laws makes her feel trapped in a cage, where eventually a particular accident reveals her worth in the eyes of her in-laws.

Leukoderma. A skin disease which appears in the form of white patches on the skin, sadly, this ten letter word is still considered a stigma in some part of the globe, where the skin pigmentation acts as a hindrance not just in the case of marriage, but serves as a curse for the whole family. This very fact is explained beautifully in the novel, where the beauty just does not lie in the way the story has been crafted, but lies in the ability of the readers to empathize the pain of the protagonist and travel with the story till the end, where she finally offers her piece of mind to her husband, who deserts her during the need of the hour. Mahasweta not just delves deep in to the emotions of the human psyche but also puts light on the mentality of the society which dons the role of a blessing as well as a curse with respect to situations. The main part of the novel that serves as an inspiration is the bravery and the determination Anupama exhibits in transforming her thoughts into positivity and emerging more stronger and matured, all thanks to the constant taunts, humiliation, negligence and indifference she faced while in her village. Moving to a city like Bombay, makes her even more matured and compassionate, where she develops the quality of being empathetic and becomes a role model for the stigmatized ones.

The ending appears to be an eye-opener for the ones who still believe that a women's identity is tied to the acknowledgement of the society and the only role that a women plays is being submissive and meek in order to live a peaceful life. Her outright rejection to Anand who comes to mend his relationship with her fails, where she proclaims her life being content surrounded by her students and being a lecturer, where she has finally found love within herself and her existence. The last pages highlight a true story, where the difference 'Mahasweta' made to a leukoderma girl, keeps the hopes alive that the society is not that bad, in giving priority only to 'physical beauty'.

