

**AN ECOFEMINISTIC READING IN THE SELECTED NOVELS  
OF SUDHA MURTY**

**Thesis Submitted in Partial  
Fulfilment of the Requirement for the  
Degree of Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.)**

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**July 2019**

## DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled “**AN ECOFEMINISTIC READING IN THE SELECTED NOVELS OF SUDHA MURTY**” submitted by me for the degree of Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.) is the record of work carried out by me during the period from August 2018 to July 2019 under the guidance of **Dr. (Mrs.) M. Anjum Khan**, Assistant Professor, Department of English and has not formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Associateship, Fellowship, Titles in the university or any other University or other similar Institutions of Higher Learning.



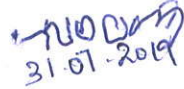
**Signature of the Candidate**

## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled “**AN ECOFEMINISTIC READING IN THE SELECTED NOVELS OF SUDHA MURTY**” submitted for the degree of **Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.)** by **Yogapriya. R** is the record of research work carried out by her during the period from **August 2018 to July 2019** under my guidance and supervision, and this work has not formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Associateship, Fellowship, Titles in the University or any other University or other similar Institutions of Higher Learning.

  
31.07.2019  
Signature of the

**Head of the Department**

  
31.07.2019

**Signature of the Supervisor**

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## CHAPTER- I

### INTRODUCTION

Literature is where I go to explore the highest and lowest places in human society and in the human spirit, where I hope to find not absolute truth but the truth of the Tale, of the imagination and of the Heart

-Salman Rushdie

Indian writing in English has acquired a powerful status in the study of world literature. The Indian writers have made significant and great contribution to world Literature Especially, after freedom there is an incredible change and thriving of Indian English writing all over the world. Indian authors have influenced a whole generation with their writings. This has created a prospect to make a profound dive in Indian realization and sensibility. English is not an unfamiliar language to the Indians. They cannot write like the English native Speakers but can only write as Indians. The method of expression proves to be individualistic.

Dr. Faustus. I'll have them fly to India for gold, Ransack the ocean for oriental pearl! (80-84)

Christopher Marlow has written a play *Dr. Faustus* at the same year as the East India Company came to India for trading. Marlowe's words denote the Elizabethan courage of venture. *Dr. Faustus* sells his spirit to the devil, converts his wisdom into supremacy, and supremacy into a worldly bliss. British East India Company has a same desire, the desire of authority. As a monarch, the company thinks of its responsibility to enlighten the natives; they offer their language by way of education in replace for the devotion and dedication of their subjects. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar says that:

It is certainly open to Indians to handle the English in such a way that, like American English, 'Indian English' too may have a right to exist as a valid variant of standard English, marked not by "Incongruities and faults" but by "special qualities and characteristics".(41)

The best reward of the British to the Indians Subcontinent is almost certainly the English language and its wealth, diverse literature. Throughout the British rule, Indians had to study the English language in order to procure education employment. As a result, the Western Education is scattered all over India. The British Empire has taken leave of India. However English rests at the heart of Indian society. It is broadly used in the media, in Higher Education and government and hence it remains a common way of communication. As a result, the Indian educated class has acquired mastery in the language. They have tried their hand at verse, prose and novel. Their descendants benefit from great advantage, both, in experience and language skills.

The Indian writers in English live in multilingual areas though they all have their own mother tongues. The nineteenth century provides only the past beginnings, the date of the first masterpiece, but not the origin of a tradition. The political uproar of the twenties gives new impulsion of attention in the cultural and religious custom of India, an interest which the nineteenth century obsession with social and religious improvement has fostered.

The Indians have brilliant narrative tradition has evidenced in the works like *Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Puranas, the Panchatantra and kathasaritsagar*, and many other. In these narratives, the gods unite with human beings, in order to fight against demons. Further, the Indian English writers have brought into their writing a certain structure. Indian writing in English has acquired a new uniqueness

similar to American and Australian literatures. Like the Sanskrit and Persian tradition, English also has entered India's linguistic and literary creativity.

In second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Indian writing in English, as well as literature in translation, has come of age. In 1981 when Rushdie's *Midnight's children* receive the Booker Prize, being an Indian novelist he brought miraculous achievement to Indian writing in English. Many writers like, Anita Desai, Vikram Seth, Shashi Tharoor, Vikram Chandra, Arundhati Roy and Manju Kapur are the important writers who contributes to Indian writing in English. In addition to it, Indian literature in regional language has achieved a significant development, with the contribution of writers like U.R. Anantha Murthy, Mahasweta Devi, Quarratulain Hyder and Girish Karnad, who have effectively translated into English. Evidently, current Indian writing which is wealthy, composite and inspiring holds enormous potential of growth and diversification in the present millennium.

A number of twentieth century writers have combined and given a new turn to Indian writings and thoughts. Writers like Khushwant Singh and Shobha De, according to newest statistic, are the bestselling writers. This is confirmed by the fact that, Khushwant Singh's *The Company of Women* has been very popular with the readers and as many as twenty-five thousand copies were sold in the first month of its publication. Indian writers as poet, novelist, essayist, and dramatist have been making meaningful and substantial contribution to world literature. Indian writing in English mainly deals with a wide range of themes. It reflects Indian ethnicity, tradition, social convention, and even Indian history through the portrayal of life in India and Indians living everywhere.

M.K. Naik remarks that, "one of the most notable gifts of English education to India is prose fiction for though India was probably a fountain head of story-telling,

the novel as we know today was an important from the west” (2). Modernization, women empowerment, Globalization, Urbanization and Industrialisation are few of the major themes of the modern Indian English writers. The present day Indian English literature is rapidly expanding India’s literary prospect in novels and short stories.

This has accomplished to create a unique extent of work with a diversity of themes. Indian writing in English has dozens of men and women writers in the post independence phase. Khushawant Singh, Manohar Malgonkar, Chaman Nahal, Arun Joshi, Amitav Ghosh, Babhani Bhattachaya are some of the outstanding figures in this period. Women writers like Shashi Deshpande, Jai Nimbkar, Rama Mehta, and Nayantara Sahgal wrote during this time.

Male writers of the time shifts their attention from traditional themes to the themes based on the national issues like Indian freedom struggle, partition riots, Hindu-Muslim partition and East West encounter. Though Khushwant Singh’s *Train to Pakistan* is considers to be a novel on partition, he believes that it is meant to send a message of Hindu Muslim unity through love and sacrifice.

Manohar Malgoonkar’s *Bend in the Ganges* passes the same message of the importance of unity and fraternity for the Indians. Chaman Nahal’s *Azadi* makes the readers aware of the serious consequences of religious fanaticism on the innocent people from both the communities. Babhani Bhattacharya’s *So Many Hungers* deals with the theme of social, political and economic exploitation of the disadvantaged Indians during the famine of Bengal in early forties of the last century.

The women writers of this period changed their focus from presenting their women characters as victims to the presentation of their claims as living human beings. Anita Desai in her *Cry the Peacock* presents a woman who asserts her rights

as an individual. Jaya did not want to face the pangs of infertility alone. She wants her husband to share her life just as she shares his life. Shashi Deshpande is more vocal in her novel, *That Long Silence*. Maya is not organized to keep quiet any more in front of the traditions. If compared, the themes handled by the women writers in this era with the women writers in the previous era, one clearly notices that passivity of women characters of the past is replaced by their active response to the situation in this era.

There are traditional women writers like Rama Mehta and Jai Nimbkar who believed in the traditional parts assigned to them. Rama Mehta's *Geeta in Inside the Haveli* is a good example of a woman who combines the old and new in her development. Though an educated girl from cosmopolitan city of Bombay, she doesn't revolt against the feudal atmosphere in the haveli. Though, she lives within the four walls of the haveli, she did not refrain from taking steps to open the gates of haveli to other children and women. Nimbkar's Vineeta in *Temporary Answers* chose her own ways of life by taking up voluntary social services. She did not withdraw from taking marital pleasures in the company of other men after her husband's immature death.

Indian English fiction has acquired new scope after liberalization and globalization of Indian economy and subsequently Indian society. New themes, new narrative techniques, innovative art of characterization and untraditional settings have entered novel writing. Many Indian fiction writers have got national and international awards in recognition of their achievement in the field. Arrival of new information technology in India connects them with literary forces outside and within India. All this improves their awareness, communication skills and responses to the changes in the field.

Mulk Raj Anand is an Indian writer and his novels mostly deal with communism. And his notable Awards are International Peace Prize in 1953, Padma Bhushan in 1968, and Sahitya Akademi Award in 1971. His notable works are *The Golden Breath: Studies in five poets of the new India* (1933), *untouchable* (1935), *Coolie* (1936), *Two leaves and a Bud* (1937), *The Village* (1939), *Across the Black Water* (1939), *The Sword and the Sickle* (1942), *The Lost Child* (1934), *The Road* (1961), *The Big Heart* (1945) .

R.K. Narayan has written Fiction, Mythology, and Non-Fiction. He is an Indian writer who is known for his works locate in the fictional South Indian township of Malgudi. His novels deals with the study of the family relationship, the repudiation of tradition, conflict between tradition and modernity. His notable awards are Sahitya Akademi Award in 1958, Film fare Award for the best story of *The Guide* in 1958, Padma Bhushan award in 1964. His distinguished works are *The Guide* (1958), *Swami and Friends* (1935), *The Dark Room* (1938), *Mr. Sampath* (1948), *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955), *The Man-Eaters of Malgudi* (1961), *A Tiger for Malgudi* (1983), *Grandmother's Tale* (1992).

Anita Desai is an Indian writer and Professor in MIT. She has won Winifred Holtby Memorial prize in 1978, Sahitya Akademi Award in 1978, Booker Prize for fiction in 1980, Neil Gunn prize in 1993, and Padma Bhushan award in 2014. Her notable works are *The Artist of Disappearance* (2011), *The Zigzag Way* (2004), *Fasting, Feasting* (1999), *Journey to Ithaca* (1995), *In Custody* (1984), and *Clear light of Day* (1980). *The Village by the Sea* (1982) .

Khushwant Singh is an Indian author, Lawyer, Diplomat, Journalist and Politician. Most of his novel deals with his realistic portrayal on sex and violence. His remarkable awards are Rockefeller Grant Award in 1966, Padma Bhushan award in

1974, Honest Man of the Year in 2000, Padma Vibhushan Award in 2007, Sahitya Akademi Fellowship award in 2010. Some of his notable works are *The Mark of Vishnu and other Stories* (1950), *Train to Pakistan* (1956), *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale* (1959), *Delhi: A Novel* (1990), *We Indians* (1993), *Women and Men in My Life* (1995), *The Company of Women* (1999).

Vikram Seth is a Novelist, poet and he has won Commonwealth poetry Prize for *The Humble Administrator's Garden* in 1985, Sahitya Akademi Award in 1988, WH Smith Award in 1994, Crossword Book Award in 1999, Padma Shri Award in 2007. His notable works are *The Golden Gate* (1986), *A Suitable Boy* (1993), *An Equal Music* (1999), *Mapping* (1980), *Beastly Tales* (1992), *The Frog and the Nightingale* (1994).

Kamala Surayya, popularly known as Kamala Das is a poet, novelist, short story writer. Her open and honest treatments of female sexuality, free from any sense of guilt, infuse her Writing with control and she got after freedom, but also marks her as an iconoclast in generation. She has won Kendra Sahitya Academy Award in 1984, Vayalar Award in 1997, Muttathu Varkey Award in 2006, and Ezhuthachan Award in 2009. Her famous works are *The Sirens* (1964), *Summer in Calcutta* (1965), *The Descendants* (1967), *The Old Playhouse and other Poems* (1973), *The Strange Time* (1977), *Only the soul knows How to Sing* (1997), *My Mother At Sixty-six* (1999).

Suzanna Arundhati Roy is an Award winning author and also a social activist and inspiration to all those who seek support to the poor and oppressed. She is a Writer, Essayist, and Activist and her novels mainly deal with Feminism, marriage, Women- Women relationship, Women-Man relationship. She received Booker Prize in 1997, National Film Award for best Screenplay in 1989, Sahitya Akademi Award in 2006, and Norman Mailer Prize Award in 2011. Her notable works are *The God of*

*Small Things* (1997), *In Which Annie Gives It Those Ones* (1989), *The Algebra of Infinite Justice* (2006).

Amitav Ghosh is an Indian writer and a Historical Fiction Writer. His works mainly deal with displacement, Diaspora, and alienation. His remarkable awards are Sahitya Akademi Award in 1997, Padma Shri award in 2007, Jnanpith Award in 2018. His major works are *The Circle of Reason* (1988), *The Calcutta Chromosome* (2000), *The Shadow Lines* (2015), *In an Antique Land* (1992), *Dancing in Cambodia and at Large in Burma* (1998), *Countdown* (1999).

Attipate Krishnaswami Ramanujan is an Indian poet, Scholar, a philologist, folklorist, translator. His works mainly deal with art, tradition, family, relation, past memories, death and so on. He won Padma Shri Award in 1983, MacAethur Prize Fellowship Award in 1994, and Sahitya Akademi Award in 1999. His notable works are *Where Mirrors Are Windows: Toward an Anthology of Reflections* (1989), *The Interior landscape: Love Poems from a Classical Tamil Anthology* (1967), *Oral Tales from Twenty Indian languages* (1991).

Meena Kandasamy is an Indian poet, fiction writer, translator and activist. Most of her work centres on Feminism and Anti-caste Annihilation Movement of the Contemporary Indian setting. Her two books were reviewed by the New Indian Express. Her important works are *Ayyankali* (2008), *Ms. Militancy* (2010), *Touch* (2006), *The Gypsy Goddess* (2014), and *When I Hit You: Or, A Portrait of the Writer as a Young Wife* (2018).

Anita Nair is also an Indian novelist. Her works mainly deals with Man-women relationship, Self-discovery, Forgiveness, self-esteem, inequality, inhumanity. She received Women Achievers Award in (2008) for literature, and Kerala Sahitya Academic Award in 2012. Her notable works are *The Better Man* (2000), *Malabar*

*mind* (2002), *Where the Rain is Born-writing about Kerala* (2003), *Ladies Coupe* (2001), *the Puffin Book of Myths and Legends* (2004), *Mistress* (2003), *Cut like Wound* (2012).

Kiran Desai is a Novelist and her writings deal with alienation, cultural clash, displacement, and exile. In *The Economic Times*, India's foremost Business publication, listed her as one of twenty "most significant" global Indian women. She won Man Booker Prize in 2006, National Book Critics Circle fiction Award in 2006, Berlin Prize Fellowship Award in 2012. Her notable works are *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* (1998), *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006), *Private Passions* (2008).

Manju Kapur is an Indian Novelist and her works deal with feeling of isolation, alienation, identity, and psychology. She is one of the best known celebrated post-Independence writer exploring sociological and psychological sensitive issues. She has won DSC Prize for South Asian literature in 2011 and Commonwealth Writer's Prize in 1999. Her notable works are *Difficult Daughters* (1998), *A Married Woman* (2003), *Home* (2006), *The Immigrant* (2008), *Custody* (2011), and *Brothers* (2016).

Kamala Markandaya is an Indian novelist and Journalist. She is known for the cultural clash between Indian urban and rural societies. Her notable works are *Nectar in a Sieve* (1955), *A Silence of Desire* (1960), *Possession* (1963), *A Handful Of Rice* (1966), *The Nowhere Man* (1972), *Two Virgins* (1973), *The Golden Honeycomb* (1977), *Pleasure City* (1982), *Some Inner Fury* (1956), *Bombay Tiger* (2008) and *Shalimar* (1982).

Gita Hariharan is an Indian Women novelist. In all her novels, she portrays the issues of family and social events. Most of her novels reflect her own life experiences. She gives importance to the women's justice and equality. Her major works are *The*

*thousand faces of night* (1992), *When Dreams Travel* (1999), *In Times of Siege*(2003), *Fugitive Histories* (2009), *The Southern Harvest* (1993), and *Ghosts of Vasu Master* (1994).

Nayantara Sahgal is an Indian writer in English who writes in the stream of national consciousness. Her work mainly deals with Tradition, Modernity and so on. Sahgal has received Sahitya Akademi Award in 2015. Her notable works are *Prison and Chocolate Cake* (1954), *From Fear Set Free* (1963), *A Time to be Happy* (1963), *Storm in Chandigarh* (1969), *The Freedom Movement in India* (1970), *Sunlight Surrounds You* (1970), *The Day in Shadow* (1971), *A Voice For Freedom* (1977), *Plans for Departure* (1985), *Rich Like Us* (1985), *Mistaken Identity* (1988), *Lesser Breeds* (2003).

Usha K. R. is the Novelist, Fiction Writer, and Editor. Her essays and short stories has been featured in Magazines, Newspaper, Collections and anthologies, including the Katha prize stories volume 5. She has received Vodafone Crossword Award for fiction and Man Asian Literary Prize in 2010 She is the author of four novels *Sojour* (1998), *The Chosen* (2003), *A Girl and a River* (2007), and *Monkey-man* (2010).

Shashi Tharoor is an Indian politician, writer. He also serves as chairperson of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs. And his notable awards are Rajika Kripalani Young Journalist Award in 1976, Commonwealth Writer's Prize in 1991. His notable works *The Great Indian Novel* (1989), *Show Business* (1992), *Riot* (2001), *Why I Am A Hindu* (2018).

Upamanyu Chaterjee is an Indian civil servant and his novels dealt with the theme of poverty and sexual discrimination in Indian society. His notable Awards are Sahitya Akademi Award in 2004, and The Hindu Best Fiction Award in 2010. His

notable works are *English August: An Indian Story* (1992), *The Last Burden* (1993), *The Mammaries of Welfare State* (2000). *Weight Loss* (2006),

Amish Tripathi is an Indian author and he wrote many novels. He impressed the millions of young Indian readers by their narrative technique and detail descriptions. He is considered to be the first pop star in fiction. Amish presented Indian myths, legends, folklore and linked them to modern India with an eye on future. His notable awards are Kalinga International Literary Award in 2018, Icon of the Year Award in 2017, and Society Young Achievers Award for Literature in 2013. And his notable works: *The Immortals of Meluha* (2010), *The Secret of Nagas* (2011) and *The Oath of Vayuputras* (2013), *Immortal India* (2017).

Shobha De is a prominent woman writer of the globalization period of Indian English literary history. Her protagonists came from higher social class and indulge in the pleasures of midnight parties. Her notable works: *Starry Nights* (1992), *Strange Obsession* (1992), *Snapshots* (1995), *Small Betrayals* (1998), *Shooting from the hip* (1994), *Sisters* (1992), *Selective betrayals* (1995) , and *Surviving Memory* (1998).

Sudha Murthy is an Indian writer. She was born on 19 August 1950 in Karnataka, India. She is best known for her social works and, her contribution to Literature in Kannada and English. Being an author, Sudha Murthy has published many stories. Her writing has an essence of common lives. She writes on her childhood, hospitality, realizing views on benevolence and charity. Many of her Kannada books are translated into English and some are also adopted into TV series. Most of her works are about children's series.

Most of Murthy's publications are through Penguin. She has written novels, technical books, travelogues, collection of short stories and non-fictional pieces, and four books for children. Her notable works are *Wise And Otherwise*(2002), *How I*

*Taught My Grandmother to Read and Other Stories*(2004), *Gently Falls The Bakula*(2008), *Mahashweta*(2000), *Dollar Bahu*(2002), *The Day I Stopped Drinking Milk*(2012), *House Of Cards*(2013), *The Thousand Stitches*(2017) and so on. One of her famous book, *How I taught my grandmother to read and other stories is a wonderful read*. It reflects her childhood association with her paternal grandparents. This book has been translated into 15 other languages.

Sudha Murty has won several awards and accolades right from her education days. She got accepted for the Raja-Lakshmi award by the Sri Raja-Lakshmi Foundation in Chennai in 2004. She received the award for her excellent performance in Social works. She won the Padma Shri, the fourth highest ranking official honour as per the Government of India and even attain doctorate for her publications. As an author of multiple short stories in both English and Kannada, Sudha Murty follows a simple rule. In the article, titled, “Herstory,” she says:

When I write a book, I don't think a lot about how the book should look like, how many pages it should have, how many thousands of words I should write, and where I have to end. None of these things bother me. For me, writing is a form of expression. Through it I actually express my joy, happiness, sorrow, and even humour.

Sudha Murty describes her writing as a pan of milk on the hob, which when boils too much, spills over. Murty in “Herstory” says, “You know that it won’t happen every day. Sometime I may not write for a year, but when the stories are ready in my mind it starts to spill over and then I start writing.” Mostly, she starts writing in the morning and gets involved completely in it. However, once a story is written Sudha Murty exposes that she can’t insert anything else to it. Once she is done with her writing she keeps the manuscript apart. She only revisits it after a few weeks or a

month when her feelings have settled and she can look at it in a more sensible way. The manuscript goes through a first round of editing, and then a final one before it is sent to the publishers.

Sudha Murthy's literary contribution in English and Kannada for the society contains minute observations, experiences, visits to various places. She supports feminism and gives power to her women characters to face the worst situations of their lives. She bends on the points where the women are strong in their worst situation and fights against the bias. She is full of humility and modesty, and uses her funds for the less privileged people.

Murthy acknowledges the cry and requirements of the poor, the destitute and the marginalized portion of the society. She writes with the background of Indian English Literature. The main protagonists are portrayed as well as educated women with the innate 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 limits of the Indian tradition. These female protagonists are suffering from the different social and domestic problems.

Sudha Murthy stresses on empowering the women who would fight their own battles. In most of her novels, there is less chance for a happy ending. She portrays a realistic picture of life. Sudha Murthy's writing is a wonderful combination of old Indian and the new twentieth century Indian culture. She is a psycho-analyst as well as an entrepreneur.

Murthy's works reflect a rare combination of philanthropic attitude and logical thoughts. Her writing takes us deep into the human mind with all its complexities. The description of characters depicts by her represents new reality which is revolutionary feature in modern literature. She is not a feminist in traditional sense that fights for

women's cause. She writes about men and women both struggling for their own existence in globalizing India.

Sudha Murty has written twenty four books. Her women characters are harsh, well-educated, respectable, middle to lower middle class individuals and overwhelmed by the disagreement related to modernity. They are also anxious about beliefs, money, approval, and achievement. She discusses how they coordinate their marriages and social relationships. Her novels are charming, they are explicable, matchless and stimulate spiritually. Therefore, the readers make themselves to aspire and to standardize their Psychological outlook.

It is a general practice in feminine writing to blame men for the sufferings of women as if men and women were born enemies and marriage was a license to carry out an agenda of exploitation of women by men. Sudha Murty is perhaps the first Indian writer in English to reason out the issue by blaming one woman for the miseries of other woman along with the man in the family. All her four novels demonstrate the strained relations between two women in the same family

Sudha Murty dives deep into the feelings of the characters and focus on the absurdity within them. She centres mainly on the feelings of native grace in her writings. The readers become well acquainted with the Karnataka places and find out about the village life. Sudha Murthy's mind is reflected in the writing of her novels. The most significant aspect of Sudha Murty's writing is that she has freed the traditional politicizing issues in feminism. It is true that condition of the women in India hundred years ago was pitiable. Women don't have any voice in their family or society. Man took all the decisions on her behalf. She did not have any identity whatsoever. It is not only the women from lower caste however; those from upper castes suffers at the hands of men arrogance.

*The Serpent's Revenge* is a captivating read, written in a plain classy way. It was published in the year 2016 under Puffin's publication. It contains 200 pages. The Kurukshetra war is the one that even made the gods take part. Although the stories of the war is well known, there are unknown event which happens in different phases of the war which shaped the war. *The Bird with the Golden Wings* by Sudha Murty is yet another gripping collection of stories. It includes stories of a poor little girl waged for her self-sacrifice, a sweet sea turning salty, and many more.

*The Day I Stopped Drinking Milk* is about young adults . It is an extraordinary tale of ordinary people. A story about Vishnu, who has a successful profession and is rich, however, does not know what happiness is. Then there is Venkat, too busy to listen to others. Murty's narration is simple, beautiful and tells how one should choose life rather than the money. *Wise and Otherwise* depicts the human nature in all its forms and colours. This non-fiction series explains human distress with strong messages.

*The Old Man and His God: Discovering the Spirit of India* is a novel discovering various forms of the human nature. It is a set of stories about the poverty and struggle that villagers, slum dwellers, and other common people have to go through. It's a tale about how they overcome struggles. It is a simple and effective narration that will give you a picture of rural India. *How I Taught My Grandmother to Read* is a story about believing what we do is right and having the courage to realize that is dream. It is translated in more than 15 languages, has received 7 awards, and grabbed a spot in the '100 Children's book to read in a lifetime'.

*Mahashweta* is an exciting story of bravery and flexibility in a world spoiled by delusion and treachery. This story centres on Anupama whose marriage falls apart when she is identifying with leukoderma. Overcoming the social disgrace of a married

woman who is left by her husband, she moves to Bombay where she finds success, reverence and recreates her life. *Grandma's Bag of Stories* brings out the recollection of a grandparent spinning tales around animals and strange characters. The story starts with Anand, Krishna, Raghu and Meena arriving at their Ajji and Ajji's house in Shiggaon. They spend the summer paying attention to their Ajji as she opens her big bag of stories. She tells stories of emperor and Cheats, princesses and Onions, monkeys and mice and Scorpions and hidden treasures.

*Three Thousand Stitches* is a collection of 11 short stories that depicts Sudha Murty's real life experience, as a human being and as the chairperson of Infosys Foundation. The book describes many stories: the rescue and remedy of 3,000 devadasis in Karnataka, her experience as the single girl studying engineering in a college full of boys, and her encounter with Bollywood across the world. *The Mother I Never Knew* comprises two novels that explore two quests by two different men. Both men never know that they have mothers. The book is a poignant, dramatic book that reaches deep into the human heart.

*The magic of the Lost Temple* is heart-warming, delightful and absolutely a nice story. Nooni, a city girl, comes to her grandparent's village to spend her summer vacations. She is astonished at the pace of life in her grandparent's village. But she rapidly gets used to their type of routine. She engages herself in a flood of activities, including papad making, arranging picnics and learning to ride a cycle, with her new-found friends.

*In The Man from the Egg*, Sudha Murty weaves charming tales of the three most powerful gods of India – the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. This book is a collection of wonderfully short, crisp stories that take us on a magical journey to a

land of gods, demigod, asuras, rakshasa, handsome valiant princes, beautiful iron-willed princesses, learned sages, proud kings and a lot more.

Sudha Murty's characters come from a middle class background. They are either from teaching field or from service area. Sudha Murty associates them with the traditional Indian society and advanced western society simultaneously. Most of the youngster characters engage themselves in their personal and professional growth. The old characters are fascinated towards riches but are reluctant to change themselves.

Sudha Murty's female characters have optimistic attitude towards life. They believe in hard work. They are extremely optimistic in their approach to life. Murty's women form their own destiny with planning and purpose. Mahashweta and Mridula do not go down to circumstances. They work to bring about a change in external situation. Sudha Murty sets the action of her novels in the villages and rural circles that exist in big cities. Combination of rural life with cosmopolitan life of the cities makes her work representative of overall Indian life. This also helps her to bring out the argument between two generations. Her characters possess Kannada names like Akka, Appa, and Avva etc. However, it does not mean that her novels are regional in scope and demand. It finds people with such characteristics elsewhere in India.

Sudha Murty fails to create co-authors and co-readers. She presents, justifies and interprets her characters leaving very little for his readers to do. This can match with the traditional Indian method of storytelling. So it makes her works unilateral, she remains a heart of attraction for the neo readers of India. This must be considered as a great service to the Indian literature.

In *Hindu*, there is an interview between Sudha Murty and Srivathsan Nadadthur. The interviewer questions her favourite genre as a reader. She remarks

It varies from season to season. I just suggested one of my team members to read Shashi Tharoor's *Era of Darkness*, I am eager to read Chetan Bhagat's *One Indian Girl* as well. Sometimes, my reading choices are defined by the place I'm travelling next. I also did that for Cuba in the past.

In Article "Herstory", Tanvi Dubey reviewed her work *Three Thousand Stitches*. Though this book is about people, it also gives us glimpses into the life and personality of Sudha Murty. The conversation is peppered with incidents and experiences from her own life.

Sudha Murty once had written the story, she will not add anything else in it. Tanvi said that, "Once she is done with her writing she keeps the manuscript aside. She only revisits it after a few weeks or a month when her emotions have settled and she can look at it in a more practical way." Tanvi Dubey also reviewed that Sudha Murty talks about women's empowerment that is, "Sudha believes women don't have to compete with men, but just with themselves. She urges them to see how better you can be than for example, how they were last year."

Sudha Murty in her own article talks about her own story about her love and respect toward House of Tata remains undiminished by the passage of time. She tells that she always looked up to Jehangir Ratanji Dadabhoy Tata. She saw him as a role model for his simplicity, his generosity, his kindness and the care he took of his own employees. In the whole article, she talks about JRD Tata.

Even *The Indian Express* presented an article about Sudha Murty the chairman of Infosys Foundation is at the airport wearing a salwar kameez, when a well-dressed lady told that "Go and stand in the economy class queue. This line is for

business class travelers”. This made her a misfit in the queue in question. But, what eventually got Sudha’s attention was when she was called a “cattle-class person”.

In same Newspaper she discussed about the women who are staying in metro cities, many college going girls become part of high-level prostitution because they want to earn quick money to buy designer clothes. This is because of the pressure created by the external force. She said, “So when I experienced the same myself at the airport I was more upset than angry.”

The another article *A life less ordinary* by Paran Balakrishnan Reviewed that Sudha Murty is one of India's richest women, combines multiple roles as charity member and bestselling author, and she tells that wealth is a burden. She says that, “Money can give you certain comforts but money has limited use. And once you realise that, money becomes a burden to you. You donate it. Money is a heavy bag on your back and you should lead a simple lightweight life.” James P. Sterba in his article reviewed that Warren is against both the domination of women and the domination of nature. Early in the book, “she considers how we might defend her perspectives against someone who was against the domination of nature, presumably because the person did not think the nonhuman nature deserved moral consideration”.

The word ‘Eco feminism’ is first derived by the French feminist Francoise d’Eaubonne in 1974. It has become an idealistic trend and a military progress in the English speaking world. The conception of ecofeminism has been first stated in 1974, in the conference “*Women and the Environment*,” that has planned by Sandra Marburg and Lisa Watson at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1974. Ecofeminists argue that there are fundamental associations between the dominance and suppression of women and scarcity of nature by masculinise techniques and attitudes. Eco feminists centre on these connections. An excellent definition of

Ecofeminism is defined by Noel Sturgeon, a ecofeminist in the book “*Literary Criticism in Indian Literature*” by S. P. Mittal as:

Ecofeminism is a movement that makes a connection between environmentalism and feminisms; more precisely, it articulates the theory that the ideologies that authorize injustices based on gender, race and class are related to the ideologies that sanction the exploitation and degradation of the environment. (167)

D’Eaubonne book, *Feminism or Death* which is notorious book in 1974 due to the first chapter of the book entitled, *The Time for Ecofeminism*, in which she discovers ecofeminist issues. She converse on many problem in her work eg. In her book, d’Eaubonne tends that

Women...have been reduced to the status of a minority by a male-dominated society, although their importance in terms of numbers, and even more significantly in terms of reproduction, should have permitted them a dominant role...And women must act to save themselves and the earth simultaneously. The two needs are intimately linked. (15-22)

In 1972, Eaubonne has established the Ecology Feminism Centre in Paris. It’s slogan is, “To tear the planet away from the male today in order to restore it for humanity for tomorrow ...if the male society persists there will be no tomorrow for humanity”. (175). Anthropologist studies have recommended identification of women with nature, and males with culture are both ancient and extensive. Margaret Atwood in *Surfacing* emphasizes the fact that men exploit the bodies of women for their needs. They have organize, the process of childbirth which nature has allotted only to women. She senses the deep aversion towards the killing of the birds and compares it

with domination and harassment of women. Men are with environment abuse especially as a metaphor of the destruction of women by men:

Why had they strung it up like a lynch victim, why didn't they just throw it away like the trash? To prove they could do it, they had the power to kill, otherwise, it was valueless... the only relation they could have to a thing like that was to destroy it. (164)

There are many eco feminists' books and articles as well as arguments are avail but it is very difficult to mention. However, undoubtedly, *Woman and Nature, the Roaring Inside Her* by Susan Griffin and *The Death of Nature* by Carolyn Merchant, *Ecofeminism* by Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva, *Ecofeminist Philosophy* by Karen Warren, *Ecofeminism as Politics: nature, Marx, and the postmodern*, by Ariel Salleh, *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, Nature*, edited by Greta Gaard , *Environmental Culture*, and *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, by Val Plumwood, *Integrating Ecofeminism, Globalization, and World Religions*, by Rosemary Ruethe, are mainly important contributions to this concept. Griffin in the introduction of the book truly declares that women are closer to the natural world:

Woman Speaks with Nature. That she hears voices from under the earth. That wind blows in her ears and trees whisper to her. That dead sing through her mouth and the cries of infants are dear to her. But for him this dialogue is over. He says he is not part of the word that he was set on this world as a stranger. He sets himself apart from woman and nature. (1)

Most of the ecofeminist and activists like Gail Omvedt, Ilina Sen and Gabriele Deitrich support the women's perspectives on issues of ecological struggles and try to focus on women power. Thus, women writing in Indian Fiction highlight the

ambivalent relationship between woman and nature in their works and it also mingles various eco feminist theories and seeking solutions for the empowerment and growth of women and nature in their novels and has made considerable contribution in Indian English literature. In *Recovering the Wildness in Ecofeminism*, Patsy Hallen explains that, “Everything is connected to everything else and each aspect is defined by and dependent upon the whole, the total context. Life is interconnected and interdependent: we are not above nature; we are an intimate part of it” (100).

Socialist Ecofeminist believes ecofeminism as philosophy and the movement came out from the combination of feminist and ecological judgments. They have opinion that the social mindsets that express the supremacy and subjugation of women is openly related to the abuse of the natural world. It unites eco-anarchism and bioregional democracy under the feminism.

For this reason, the masculine possession of land led to the dominating civilization that is also known as patriarchal society which also led to exploitation and oppression of individuals. Under the abusive land ethics, animals and land is also considered only as economic possessions. Women’s association with the natural world and their acquaintance from all walks of life can make opportunities for others to give importance to it. The connection between woman and nature is undeniable.

The role of patriarchal system in the domination of both women and nature must be analysed and transformed to offer liberation to both women and Nature. Therefore, the present study, titled, “An Ecofeministic Reading in the Selected Novels of Sudha Murty,” is an attempt to carry out an ecofeministic reading of Sudha Murty’s selected novels – *Gently Falls the Bakula*, *Dollar Bahu*, and *House of Cards*.

The objective of the present study is to understand Indian writing in English with special focus on Sudha Murty and to sensitise the development of

corporate world versus traditional world. The main objective is to analyse the selected novels of Sudha Murty in the light of ecofeminism. The study aims at examining the plight of women characters and compare it with the predicament of nature.

The present study, titled, “An Ecofeministic Reading in the Selected Novels of Sudha Murty,” follows the 8<sup>th</sup> MLA book for research methodology. It is divided into five chapters including introduction and conclusion. The first chapter is titled, “Introduction.” It presents a detailed survey of Indian fiction and places Sudha Murty as a writer. It furnishes several reviews on Sudha Murty and her works followed by the concept of ecofeminism. The chapter concludes with thesis statement, objectives and the structure of the thesis.

The second chapter is titled, “Bloom and Gloom.” It is an analysis of novel, *Gently Falls The Bakula*. The chapter focuses on the women characters and their exploitation in a male-dominated society. The third chapter is titled, “Damsel and Dollar.”, It is an analysis of Sudha Murty’s novel *Dollar Bahu*. It examines the female characters with special attention on Vinuta.

Fourth chapter is titled, “Women and Wealth.” is It an analysis of Sudha Murty’s novel, *House of cards*. It scrutinises the lives of protagonist Mridula and other female characters. The fifth chapter titled, “Conclusion.” It concludes by consolidating the analysis from all the core chapters. It presents forth the observation at the end of the Ecofeministic reading of the selected primary texts.

## CHAPTER- II

### BLOOM AND GLOOM

The term 'Ecofeminism' is an ideology that sees a connection between the subjugation of nature and the subjugation of women. Sudha Murthy's *Gently Falls the Bakula* is about the subjugation of women. It is about the repression of women's dream and desire. Shrimati, the protagonist represents the subjugated women who let their male counterparts climb over them to reach the pinnacle of their career.

The book is titled, *Gently Falls the Bakula* possibly to describe the patient love of Shrimati. The bakula flower has a pleasant and strong smell and the fragrance stays even when the flower is some days old. In the beginning, it foreshadows the love of Shrikant and Shrimati. Shrimati's love is like the bakula flower, giving out fragrance long after it is crushed. This novel mainly talks about a husband-wife relationship and how the single-minded ambition of one partner can spoil a beautiful nurtured relationship. The relationship between Shrikant and Shrimati's families blossoms with the blossoming of bakula.

The novel, *Gently Falls the Bakula* begins with a school competition which introduces the two competitors, Shrimati and Shrikant. Shrimati is a simple girl with wheatish complexion. She has long hair which she loves to adore with strands of bakula. Shrikant is a fair-complexioned boy who lives next door. They studied in the same school as well as in the same class. However, their families are not on speaking terms. In the middle of their houses, there is a bakula tree with a good fragrance. Even though they are neighbours, they often brawl with each other. It is their ego that is accountable for their contained hate. Shrikant and Shrimati are fond of Bakula tree.

Shrimati and Shrikant are drawn towards each other. One day they happen to travel in the same train compartment. They overcome their reservations and speak to

each other. He feels towards Shrimati because of many reasons. One reason can be that she is beyond his reach. The author compares Shrimati to forbidden fruit, “Perhaps because they were opposites in nature, or because she was his rival or because forbidden fruit is always more desirable!” (26).

The novel is set in an idyllic small village. Bhandiwad is a small village in Karnataka. It is characterized by its cool and calm social atmosphere. Life in Bhandiwad moves slowly, without hurry and flurry. It had its direct contact with the self-fulfilled nature of the people in the village. The village is home to nature and individuals who live with nature. Murty described Bhandiwad as follows:

Bhandiwad is a small village near Hubli and the local deity Hanuman, is very famous for bestowing great boons upon his devotees. There is a strong belief that if someone requested a favour and fasted on Saturdays, their requests would be fulfilled. In return, they just had to offer some sweets to him to thank him for the boon. Since the pedas of Dharwad were very famous, so much so that people of North Karnataka said that if you hadn't eaten the peda your life was wasted.

(9)

In this novel Sudha Murty talks about three districts that come under the Bombay presidency. All three districts are rich in natural resources. At first, she talks about Bijapur, home of famous Gol Gumbaz, one of the largest domes in the world is known for its salubrious climate, fertile land, and tasty produce. There is a Kannada proverb that says, “‘once the doni halla is full of water, the streets of Bijapur are full of Jowar.’ Then for next four to five years, people didn't have to worry about the crops. Karwar is on the west coast and rich in natural resources. The Sahyadri

Mountains tower over the region” (11). Even Dharwad stands apart. It is a city of hills, education and music.

The setting is an important element in determining the degree of patriarchy in this novel. Shrikant and Shrimati hail from the village, Bhandiwad in Karnataka state. In Ancient times, Hubli has been a patriarchal society. The head of the family decides everything like organizing a marriage, giving a donation to a temple, and a usual household matter. Women are allowed to do only the household chores, rather than any contribution to society. In this novel, Sudha Murty depicts the life of women in Hubli, “The women were always in the background, suppressed, subservient, irrespective of their age.” (12).

Shrimati represents all the women from this community in the novel. She also represents nature in the novel. The character of Shrimati resembles the bakula flower. She looks simple but her heart is very beautiful. The small act of kindness and appreciation towards Shrimati makes her more overwhelmed and joyous. Similarly, the bakula flower blooms in abundances when it receives rain. The author gives an account:

In the space between the two houses, there was a bakula tree. The bakula is about the size of a neem tree and has a lovely canopy of dark leaves. The tree lives for at least a hundred years, and the more it rain, the more flowers it bears, the bakula flower is very unusual – it is tiny, pale greenish- brown in color, and is shaped like a crown. As flowers go, it is unattractive, but it has a divine fragrance. Even when the flowers dry and become brown the mild fragrance remains. When the tree is in bloom, the flowers form a carpet on the ground beneath it.

The becoming bakula flower is a favourite of the gods too!

(Gently, 16)

Shrimati is an embodiment of nurturing qualities. Similar to nature, Shrimati also nurtures her surroundings. She does everything in her capacity to make her husband comfortable. She helps her mother-in-law and other relatives. In *Feminism and The Mystery of Nature*, Plumwood observes:

Women have special powers and the capacities of nurturance, empathy and closeness to nature which are un-sharable by men and which justifies their special treatment, which of course nearly always turns to be an inferior treatment in male dominance society. (8)

The novel describes a temple named Railway Eshwar temple, where devotees offer Bilwathra flower to get their wishes granted by the god. This proves that nature also forms as a channel between the devotees and God. It is a vessel of spirituality. The offering of flowers is an important metaphor. It is the act of submission and prayer. The author emphasizes on the faith of the devotees, “People believed that if one prayed to him offering the Bilwathra with all devotion, their wishes would certainly be granted”. (9).

Nature is earnest and industrious. Similarly, Gangakka is hard working. She never wastes her time. Her garden is the result of her toil. She has made a beautiful garden, “With many flowering bushes and vegetables. It was a part of her ritual to wake up early in the morning, pick flowers and make a garland, to offer at the temple of railway Eshwar” (17). this is irrespective of the season. According to her, this offering would bring wealth and pleasure to her children. Her children are her world. She does everything in their interest.

Nature makes humans happy. Nature's seasons are intertwined with human lives. There is a season for work and there is another season to rest. There is also a season for love. The author marvellously describes, "The ripe fruits on the mango tree hinted the end of the mango season. Farmer eagerly awaited Shraavan, the rainy season. A season that brings happiness to nature as well as human beings" (16).

Both Nature and women are the life provider and the great conservators in nature. As they both give life, they both have to bear the pain as if cultivated, pierced and dug. The process of giving birth requires endurance. However, they give unconditional and selfless love and concern to their children and their future generation. Further, both women and nature become the sufferers of over exploitation and destruction.

Likewise, Margaret Atwood also deals with the problems of women and nature in many of her novels. The dominance of women in a male-conquered society, and abuse of nature due to technology is the major themes of her writing. Her novel, *Surfacing* has been interpreted as a feminist novel and it can be described in terms of ecofeminism. In *Surfacing*, power and supremacy, directly dominates both the feminine world and the natural world. At the end of the novel Anna, the protagonist understands nature offers identity. She makes herself ready for maternity and reintegration into society.

Atwood attempts to fill confidence and dignity in her women in this novel and depicts how they tackle all odds and difficulties with courage and determination. It also very subtly suggests that for the continued term of man on this planet, the ecofeminist option is the only solution and that there has to be a new mode of intimation between human and nature, man and woman based on mutual respect and understanding.

In *Gently Falls the Bakula*, the calmness of nature is connected with Shrimati. The bakula tree provides strength to Shrimati. It also provides a refuge to the young lovers, Shrimati and Shrikant. The tree stands guard to their secret meetings. It occupies a central position. Sudha Murty locates, “The bakula tree stood gracefully, as usual, spending its fragrance. It was evening, and flowers lay on the ground, forming a carpet of blossoms” (16).

Shrimati loves the flowers and she after meeting Shrikant, grows fonder of it. It act as a bridge between Shrimati and Shrikant. It stands for their forbidden and secret love. Shrimati is stunned by Shrikant’s simple nature and craving to succeed in life. Alike, Shrikant loves Shrimati’s serious nature and devotion to the self-selected chores.

Shrikant recollects many ancient stories that establish that there is a connection in bakula flower and romance. In olden days when men travelled to faraway places and left behind their home, they carried a small token. This small token always reminded the Youngman of their beloved. Shrikant says that, “The bakula flower was one such memento that these young men carried, because, even though it would dry up, it would still give out the same fragrance, like the beloved’s love. Without realizing it, Shrikant had come to associate the bakula flower with Shrimati” (19).

Nature is cheered up by showers of rain. Likewise, Shrimati is also happy when she receives affection. The happiness of nature is compared with Shrimati’s mood. The rainy season drenches Hubli. There is a continuous drizzle. Mother earth is so thirsting that she was looking for the rain. In bakula tree, “The dried yellow grass was turning green. Flowers bloomed and were looking fresh as if after a bath. The

beautiful Champaka flower shivered in the cold breeze. The bakula tree was so happy that it was laden with blossoms” (24).

In this novel Sudha Murty tells about Champaka flower also. She describes the beauty of this flower. There are flowers strewn across the narrative of the novel. Every flower is a metaphor of the protagonist, Shrimati. The vibrant colours of Bakula tree are compared with happiness of Shrimati for her good result in the exam. Shrimati blooms with the happiness like the bakula tree.

Nature and women are similar in the aspect of man’s exploitation as well. Man exploits both nature and women. Shrimati is exploited by Shrikant. She serves her husband as a wife and as a faithful friend. She denies herself the luxury of higher studies to aid Shrikant in his career. However, Shrikant’s hunger for success is never satisfied. He exploits the good nature of Shrimati and feeds on her kindness.

The Bakula tree plays a vital role in the novel. It provides a motive to the quarrel between the two neighbours. Shrikant’s mother Gangakka wants to cut the tree. However, Rindakka does not accept the cutting of the tree because she wants to oppose Gangakka. Further, it is the bakula tree which brings Shrimati and Shrikant together.

Shrikant is fascinated by the simple beauty of Shrimati just like he is struck by the plain beauty of bakula flower. Shrikant holds bakula flowers in his palm and is fascinated. The flower is neither as beautiful as a rose nor has the fragrance of jasmine or champaka. However, it draws him towards it. He wants to befriend Shrimati not just because she is beautiful but because she is unattainable. Shrimati is very intelligent which makes Shrikant more attracted towards her.

The bakula tree is very significant. Further, Shrimati and Shrikant seek refuge under the bakula tree, “Shrikant and Shrimati would meet every day near the bakula

tree, and talk about various things. Shrimati would diligently gather the bakula flowers, while Shrikant would talk about his college and his dreams” (29). In spite of the extreme hatred in the family, Shrikant and Shrimati grow fond of each other.

Once Shrikant gets a seat in IIT in Bombay, both Shrimati and Shrikant write letters to each other. After a few days, Shrimati starts sending one flower with every letter to Shrikant. Shrikant appreciates this gesture. He adores every flower posted to him. According to him, bakula is a symbol of Shrimati, “Shrikant collected all the bakula flowers in a small bag and placed it beneath his pillow. He knew that the scent from the flowers would not fade with time.” (34).

Shrimati loves to be among trees and nature. One day after Vacation, Shrikant surprises Shrimati with a regrettable visit to Hubli. Shrimati decides to go to Atthikolla. It is a picnic spot in, “Dharwad, known for its mango groves. At this time of the year, early February, all the trees were covered with tender, new leaves, reddish green in colour. It was a very pleasant season winter was over and the heat of summer was yet to begin” (38).

Both women and nature are considered as ordinary by men. Patriarchy is predominant in the society. Even the women pave way for this system of patriarchy. Shrimati’s mother, Kamala advise her that she will never be loved by Shrikant's mother and sister and that every daughter-in-law's always wants to be appreciated by her mother-in law will not be fulfilled in her case. She says that:

Shrimati, some things in life have remained unaltered from time immemorial. The relation between a mother-in-law and Daughter-in-law are always strained. You do not possess our patience. I will tell you that every daughter-in-law always wants to be appreciated and

loved by her in-laws. In your case, you will never get that. You will be loved only by Shrikant. (53)

Women are valued in terms of qualities. They are tagged like commodities. Gangakka decides to look for the bride for her son Shrikant. She announces, “we are looking for a good graduate girl, but not for money. If an eligible, adjusting girl comes with just coconut, we will still be happy, ‘was her statement” (57). Here Gangakka compare women with a coconut.

After many of arguments, both the families agree for the marriage. However, Gangakka is not happy to have Shrimati as her Daughter- in –law. Due to Shrikant’s compulsion, she accepts for their marriage. Normally, wedding garlands are made of jasmine, rajanigandha or sevanthige. However, for their wedding, the garland is made of bakula flowers. This marks yet another sign of the flower, bakula. This garland makes Shrimati happier and she blooms with delight.

Shrimati’s life in the beginning is simple and easy. Both of them are concerned about making adjustments for the other. Shrikant encourages Shrimati to be progressive and modern. He advises, “, get out of the old custom! When I can call you by your first name, you should also be able to do the same. First, we were good friends and now I have become your husband. That’s all” (71).

Bombay is another setting in the novel. It is in state contrast with Hubli. Bombay is full of crowd, concrete structures, and pollution. Ten days after the marriage, Shrikant and his wife Shrimati arrive at Bombay. Shrimati is full of new hopes and refigured determination. However, she is disappointed with the vista that meets her eyes in Bombay. She is unpleasantly shocked at the sight of her home in Bombay:

It was the month of August. The monsoon had set in and it was pouring in Bombay. Bombay rains are so different from the rains in Dharwad. The continuous rain would disrupt local life, but the disciplined citizens of Bombay never complained. Shrimati was shocked to see her small single bed room apartment at Bandra. (71).

The first phase of their married life is marked by their spirit of sacrifice and dedication to each other. Subsequently, Shrimati starts feeling a little lonely and seriously begins to think to progress her studies. Shrikant welcomes the plan wholeheartedly. She is offered to go to Delhi to continue her Ph.D. but she refuses to go there because she wants to be a part of her husband's achievement.

The unselfish quality of nature is compared to Shrimathi's selfless nature. Shrimati does not think about her self. She discharges her duties as a dutiful wife. Shrimati helps Shrikant in repaying the loan by taking jobs which she does not like. She tells her husband that, "When you are mine, your loan is also mine. It comes as a package. I cannot say I want only my husband. His joys and difficulties are also acceptable" (77). this shows her unselfish nature towards Shrikant.

Likewise in Anita Desai's *Fire on the Mountain*, Nanda Kaul is a woman full of sacrifices. She is a mother, wife, and grandmother who spends whole life for her family by ignoring her own desires. She crushes her dreams, sacrifices and loses her own identity. She toils all her life way for her family. She carries out all the household chores like a slave. Her traumatic marital life is presented in the below lines:

Nor had her husband loved and cherished her and kept her like a queen. He had only done enough to keep her quiet while he carried on a lifelong affair with Miss David...and her children were all alien to her

nature... she did not live here by choice, she lived here alone because that was what she was forced to do, reduced to doing. (143)

Sudha Murty likes to compare Shrimati with Mother Nature. Like Nature, She is also giving everything and sacrifices herself to her family, without thinking of her desires. Both women and Nature tolerate everything calmly. They both suffer at the hands of men. Both nature and women are exploited, used, overpowered, and crushed. Both wither away as a result of continuous sufferings.

Nature and women are both helpful to the society. Nature helps men by providing with necessities of life. Further, it facilitates every need of life, right from oxygen to water. Similarly, women help men to live and lead. Shrimati takes care of everything for Shrikant. She forgets her own needs and look after her husband's needs.

Murty furnishes a wonderful fable inside the novel to stress upon the sacrifices of women. Once Shrimati and Shrikant go to Restaurant and they talk about the Bhamati story. It is about a very studious sage who wanted to create some revolutionary work. The sage works very hard to achieve it. The sage's mother is worried and wants to find a caregiver for her son as he does not look after himself. As a result, she finds him a bride. However, the sage continues to immerse in his work and he does not care for his wife. On the other hand, the wife takes care of every single need of the sage. Shrimati narrates the pathetic condition of the wife:

When the sage's mother died, the young bride did not wait for her husband but came on her own to his house. She understands the situation. She used to work outside and get money, cook for her husband and look after him like a mother. This man continued his work. Time passed by and one night, after he had completed the last

line of the book, he noticed an old women sleeping on the floor. He recognized her face but could not remember who she was. He woke her up and asked, “Lady, who are you? When did you come here?” She replied politely that she was his wife and explained that she had been with him for the last forty years, ever since his mother had died. ( 82-83)

The sage is dumb-struck by this revelation. He asks her name with great respect and she replies Bhamati. The sage writes on the first page of the text as “Bhamati.” Shrimati says, “Bhamati signifies all those women who sacrifice their youth for the betterment of their husbands. Nobody remembers that sage’s name but Bhamati stands out” (83).

While women’s labour and reproductive abilities had for thousands of years been exploited and freely accessed, this devaluation of both women and environment is redefined in language, leading to terms like ‘Virgin Earth’, ‘Fertile land’ and ‘Barren soil’. Shrimati feels lonely and she does not have any children. She feels unhappy about it. She wants to have children, “...Let’s not be in a hurry to have a baby”. (86).

Shrimati suffers both psychologically and socially. She is unable to have children which reduce her position further below in society. She is already alone and unhappy. This loneliness is combined with the taunts from her family and society. One monsoon evening Shrimati is sitting in the balcony, staring at the road. She feels dejected and far away from this world, “The rain was splashing on to the balcony and she was getting wet. But she continued sitting there, with no inclination to get up”. (94). She feels desolate and aged.

Shrimati and Shrikant find out that they cannot have their children. As a result, Shrimati wishes to adopt. But Shrikant rejects her idea. He is not convinced that the adopted children will love him and his family as their own. He says, “Shrimati, think again. Other people’s children will never be ours”. (98). Once Shrimati is sick and she feels all the more lonely. She wouldn’t experience motherhood hurts her deeply. Shrikant starts preparing himself for a business tour to round the world. However, Shrimati is unwell and quite upset due to his trip.

Women’s exploitation in society is compared with nature. Shrikant notices that Shrimati is very unwell and is quite upset. He says to her that, “Shrimati, you don’t listen to me at all. All the time you sit in the balcony and watch the sea. The sea breeze has affected you. If you fall ill now, how can I go?” (105). Shrimati is not ill due to the sea breeze. She is ill because of loneliness and emptiness in life. Shrikant wants to blame everything on nature and on Shrimati. He does not realise his own mistake. He does not realise that he should care for Shrimati’s needs as well

Shrimati undergoes many sufferings. The lack of love and care is one of the main reasons for all her miseries. Shrikant’s neglect of Shrimati leads to a lot of emotional troubles. Shrikant treats her like any other employee. He employs her to host his official parties and social gatherings. He uses her as a decorative piece in his social meetings. He wants her to smile at everyone and do the small talk. He often talks about the company or other business matter. The only time he talks to her is to assign a list of chores for her to do. This makes her to feel lonely:

For him she had undergone so much opposition, criticism and nastiness from her in-laws. She had even given up her career, only because she really loved him. Shrikant was not the same person she knew before their marriage. This Shrikant Deshpande was only interested in name,

fame, position and status. In building up his business, he had forgotten his dear wife. This Shrikant appeared a stranger to her. Where could she find her old ‘Shri?’” (118).

In earlier days, Shrikant is fascinated by Shrimati’s knowledge of history. He encourages Shrimati to pursue her passion for history. However, this changes and Shrikant is known more interested in Shrimati’s life. He thinks that only his work is important and great. He undervalues Shrimati. One day, he shouts at her, “Don’t talk about your worthless history. The world of business is so different from yours. History cannot feed you”. (125). Shrimati asks her husband if she is important to him. But, she does not receive any proper reply. This makes Shrimati so depressed.

Shrimati understands her husband if she is important to him. But, she does not receive any proper reply. This makes Shrimati so depressed. She thinks that the corporate sector has taken their good relationship away. Once, Shrimati suggests to Shrikant that they can move back to Hubli as they have adequate money. Shrikant does not agree. He wants to earn more and achieve more. He says:

Shrimati, are you aware of what you just said? Think rationally, and be practical. You want me to retire at the age of thirty-three! A man is in his prime at this age. It is the time for him to grow professionally. Besides, I still feel that I have not achieved much in life. I cannot live in Hubli. What would I do there? Hubli is my past. I will be like a fish out of water in Hubli, though I was born and brought up there. My present and future is in Bombay. I do not waste even a moment here.  
(134)

Shrimati understand that she is only an object in her husband’s life. She is not an equal partner. She has no say in her own life. She cannot decide things for them.

Everything she proposes displeases Shrikant. She has not done anything with her life. Her life is miserably empty. She realises her loss. She wishes to spend her energy and care in the pursuit of her interest. She decides to pursue her higher studies. She writes to Professor Collins and gets a reply back. The reply is hopeful:

It is quite natural for a scholar like you to wish to become a student again. Getting a scholarship for you is not difficult at all. As there are many things we need to discuss, I feel that you come at least one week before the term begins. Please do not discard your writings thinking they are outdated. Do bring them. I have Dorothy to look for a small apartment for you near the university. Being a vegetarian, it would be better for you to be on your own, than in a dormitory. I consider myself to have a student like you at my age. (154)

Shrimati reads the letter again and again. Once again she becomes a student. She trusts that life has opened another door for her. She wants to pursue her dream and live her life. She realises that all this time she has not lived her own life. She makes her decision with head. She does not want to bring sentiments in her decisions. She is happy and feels free. She feels free of Shrikant's imposed iceties and parties. She feels free of listening to her husband and she can listen to herself and do as she wants. She feels free of others who only have taken away from her and not given.

Shrimati does not want to think of her responsibility. She wants to support and care for her husband. But at the same time, she has to give herself a chance to live. She finally knows that her life is her own choice. She thinks of her lonely heart, "Or was it her unbearable loneliness? She knew that many women go into depression, become alcoholics, and in some case become kleptomaniacs. Psychiatrists believe that women do this in order to draw the attention of their busy, ambitious husband" (156).

Marriage is ideal. But, a broken marriage which contains only pieces hurt both the parties. Shrimati realises that she is going to make a bold and unconventional move. But, it is the men who have formed such conventions. It is the men who demand everything of their women counterparts. They want women to assist and enslave for them. Shrimati disagrees with that belief. She feels that there is a limit to which one could be respectful and submissive.

Shrikant's wife Shrimati is fed up with her existing life. She is tired of being left alone and left behind. She realises that her sacrifices have amounted to nothing. She has lost her husband to the corporate world. As a result, Shrimati makes an arrangement to go to America. She informs this to Shrikant and hands him over the house. In the journal "Economic and Political weekly" the Article *Relinquishing the Halo: Portrayal of Mother in Indian Writing in English*, the famous critic Sanjeeta Dutta rightly comments on the women's identity that:

In India, a long history of mother-goddess worship legitimizes woman's glorification/deification as the divine mother, the source of energy, power and fertility while the same motherhood is an institutionalized form of oppression and subjugation of women. In a patriarchal kinship structure, a woman's status in the household is determined by her ability to produce male issues for her husband's lineage. Her identity revolves around the wife/mother roles beyond which no individuality needs to be established or recognized. (84)

Shrimati realizes that she is all alone in her life. Even her husband is not with her anymore. She realizes that she has been used by him as a flower. She has been adored, used, and now discarded. There is myth during the shake of the oceans, the dangerous poison haalahala came out, and that time Lord Shiva drank it for the

benefit of mankind. Likewise, “Poor Shrimati swallowed every poisonous insult, just to keep Shrikant happy” (166).

Shrikant realizes that Shrimati has gone forever and not just for the studies. He realizes that he has been taking her for granted. He looks back with remorse, “Now when I look back, I feel she was the brightest. She knew what she liked and she liked and she did exactly that” (168). Though Shrimati leaves Shrikant his mind focuses only on his work. At this odd time he says to himself that, “For success there is no odd and even hours. Every minute is precious. I will go to office and work on that” (169).

In this novel, Nature and human nature are very intricately woven. *Gently Falls the Bakula* is a marvellous narrative by Sudha Murty interweaving the several realities of life. Murty has given narrative voices to her women characters to discover the sufferings of Indian women. She has also concentrated on the environmental degradation taking place in a modernizing and industrializing India.

Sarah Joseph in her work *Gift in Green* studies the psyche of women in isolation and far from civilization. Here both woman and nature become the victims of male supremacy. It involves the issues of ecological destructions and the aftermath of environmental degradation. “To be a man, one must have a body made firm by working hard on the land, tilling and sowing. To know the mind of woman, he has to know, first the mind of the land” (20). Shrimati undergoes mental and physical pain, but she truly transcends the concerns of the world and reached that state, when she can forgive all and accept all in a blend of selfless love and compassion

Shrimati knows that Shrikant has no interest in deep human relations with anybody. His company and his promotions concerned to him more than a living human being. Shrikant is outraged by Shrimati’s decision to leave him. As he thinks

of Shrimati, he hears a plane flying over Bandra. Shrikant reflects, “Shrimati, who had walked with him side by side in the same Shravan rain for ten years had now left him all alone” (169).

Sudha Murty has uniquely written this novel with the symbolic rationalisation. In this novel, Nature is used as an ideal theme. She has merged the nature with the character, Shrimati. This novel is rich with the descriptions of woman and environment. Here the Bakula flower is used to present the inner character of Shrimati. Murty uses nature as a metaphor as well.

Feminism is a set of guidelines that tries to build up social, political, cultural, gender equality and rights for women and looking forward to transforming the world to the improvement and advantage of women. In the book *The Second Sex*, Simon De Beauvoir opines that women’s thinking of herself as less valuable or commendable than men, rely on men, bounce from her appreciation that, “The world is masculine on the whole, those who fashioned it, ruled it and still dominate it today, are Men” (629)

## CHAPTER-III

### DAMSEL AND DOLLAR

The present chapter makes a keen attempt to examine and appraise the elements of ecofeminism in *Dollar Bahu* by introducing the author of this notable novel namely Sudha Murty. Sudha Murty occupies an eminent position among the Indian English writers. The close reading of this novel presents Murty's insight into the problems of the dominance of woman and nature within the male subjugated society as well as their interconnection.

Nature and women are closely interconnected. Griffin interprets in her book, *Woman and Nature: Roaring Inside Her* that, "I know am made from the earth, as my mother's hands were made from this earth, as her dreams came from this earth...you...are earth too, and listen as we speak to each other of what we know, the light is in us"(227).

The nature with all its phenomena rule the whole universe and it is a main cause for civilization to exist on this planet. This whole natural system cannot be control or governed by man. Though, being free gifts of nature, human beings starts abusing these resources for their personal gain and desires. As result natural resources are being despoiled and gradually fading away the natural setting with the concern of the universal pressure revolving around us.

The key centre of Ecofeminism is to safeguard trees, animals and soil. In fact, it aims to point out the exploitation of environment and women in a line. The quote given below is from the Malayalam story "*The Inheritors of The Earth*" by Vaikkom Muhammed Baseer. Evidently, it gives an ideal example that the animals can understand the global ideology but not the society or Human being. Henceforth, earth belongs to all living things on this planet so man has to share out equally with other

creatures on earth, “The dog has barked and the birds have let out frantic chirps. Was there any snake? Yeah, Comrade Cobra! Beaten it to death? Nothing doing” It is one of God’s creations. Let it live. It is also an heir to this globe”.

The main three wings of ecofeminism are Cultural, Spiritual and Social Ecofeminism and their prime importance is to define the natural connection of women and supports the notion of Mother Earth and Femininity of Nature. According to Vandana Shiva and Maria, Ecofeminism is regarding as the correspondence of society’s relationship with natural world and woman. Ecological destruction and industrial calamity constitute a direct hazard to everyday life. They also talk about the rising of women everywhere and guarding life from the industrialist patriarchal world system.

Sudha Murty, a significant figure in Indian literature, describes tragedy of human souls, summed up in difficult circumstances occurring throughout the life. She portrays the contemporary scenario through her writing. She portrays the fear and confusion of women in the society. As far as Sudha Murty is concerned, she writes mainly about the miserable situation of women under the male dominated society. She is an object of gaze in the masochistic society where she is playing different roles as, a daughter, a spouse, a mother, an artist or a writer. Most of her characters are subjugated.

The nature with its phenomenon rules the whole universe and it is a prime source for civilization to live on this planet. This entire natural system cannot be governed by man. However, being free gifts of nature, human beings started abusing these resources for their own gain and needs. Likewise, the exploitation of women is also a universal phenomenon. Just like feminism, ecofeminism too is not one however; all the ecofeminist philosophers believes that there are varieties of

ecofeminism outlooks about the connection as well as exploitation of woman and nature like historical, experimental, symbolic, and theoretical.

In the Indian milieu when a woman gets married, she marries not only the person but an entire family consisting of many relationships like, mother-in-law, father-in-law, sister-in-law, and brother-in-law and so on. Sudha Murthy perceives everything minutely and carefully. She discovers the different roles of women as that of a wife, mother-in-law and sister-in-law. *Dollar Bahu* is a beautiful narrative of middle class family, living at Jayanagar, Bangalore. The novel highlights the fact that family love, affection and bonding are more important than money.

The story is set in two countries, the first half in India, in which it discovers the feelings of the protagonist Vinuta, within the frame of the disintegrating relationship in her household, due to the blinded passion developed by her mother-in-law for the 'Dollar'. The second part of the story is set in America, when Vinita's mother-in-law, Gouramma, visits her older son Chandru. As Gouramma meets every character she grows up inwardly, and finally understands that family bond holds more riches than 'Dollar'.

The novel begins in a train. One of the characters Chandru travels in the train to Dharwad for his new job. During the journey, he hears a sweet voice from the next compartment. It is Vinuta, a fair young woman with beautiful eyes. Chandru is attracted toward Vinuta in his first sight. Vinuta lives in Dharwad. She is fair with bold and beautiful eyes, thick hair braids into plait and her sweet voice captivates Chandru. Vinuta is as simple as the small town of Dharwad. The novelist compares the natural beauty of Dharwad with Vinuta through these lines:

It was the month of Shravan, the rainy season. All of Dharwad was celebrating, the city a riot of colour. Against the rich red earth, the

trees, shrubs and bushes displayed every shade of green. The air was fragrant with the scent of flowers, bright yellow champak, creamy white rajnigandha, flaming orange marigold, delicate white jasmine and roses in all shades of red and pink. It was quite romantic, the atmosphere. (7)

Malamaddi is one of the seven hills where Kitty's house is situated. It is a place available for a paying guest. Chandru has not seen such a pretty house in Bangalore. Chandru notices, "Mango, jackfruit and banana trees growing on one side. Closer to the house were beds of multicoloured flowers, and bushes of fragrant jasmine. He was surprised to see a tall parijata tree and the rare bakula with its dainty brown flowers next to it. Several varieties of champak dotted the rest of garden"(8).

Chandru reaches and meets Vinuta in Dharwad. In fact, he lives in the same house, but on a different floor. Frequently, Chandru watches Vinuta from the window upstairs when she waters the plants. He also enjoys her singing when watering the plants. Vinuta is an orphan, and she is living with her uncle Bheemanna. She does all the chores and takes care of the family. However, she is treated with unkindness sometimes. Vinuta has a golden voice and deep dedication in her singing. It is like the voice of singing birds. She is simple, pristine, and lives with nature. She is very fond of gardening. The novelist compares her singing with birds through the words:

The sun was dazzling in the bright blue sky, the air alive with the chirping birds and the bakula and parijata flowers gave off a heady scent. Together, it was quite an intoxicating feeling, thought Vinu. The radiance of the morning was reflected in her face and echoed in the joy she felt in her heart. Vinuta gathered the bakula flowers that had fallen

to the ground and, smelling their gentle fragrance, closed her eyes in a moment of happiness. (10)

The unselfish quality of Nature can be compared to Vinuta's selfless nature. Vinuta is hard working. She takes care of her uncle's family. She never complains. She looks after the garden. After her marriage to Chandru, she takes care of her in-laws. She does not mind doing all the work. She works very hard. She is a working woman, however, she does not rest at home and toils all her time away in taking care of every one.

Like nature, she is also met with unkindness. Her kindness is returned with harshness and cruelty. She works sincerely and besides her work enjoys the company of nature. She loves singing which receives lot of criticism. One day when she is chided for her singing, "Do you have to keep singing all the times? Do some worthwhile work at last some time. If you sit in the garden the whole day, who will do the housework? The dirty vessels are piling up. I am sick of reminding you about every task. God knows when your madness for music will go away. A croaky voice interrupted Vinuta's song. Abruptly she stopped singing and ran inside" (11).

One day Chandru happens to stay at home and learns about Vinuta's plight. He listens to her song and finds himself enchanted by it. He thereafter, tries always to steal himself and listen to Vinuta's song. He also realises that Vinuta is treated well by her relatives. He wishes to do something for her. However, he is unable to do. He wishes to bring happiness to Vinuta. Chandru feels sorry for Vinuta. He knows that Vinuta looks happy but in reality, she is always sad, "Perhaps, he thought, she shed her tears while watering the garden and no one in the house knew of her sadness. Only when she got married and went away would they realize the value of her presence, thought Chandru bitterly" (14).

Nature is helpful and so is Vinuta. She helps everyone. Chandru plays cricket with his friends and returns home with dislocated elbow. Doctor asks him to take rest for three weeks. Hence, Bheemanna orders Vinuta to take care of Chandru. Chandru feels it is an additional responsibility for Vinuta. However, Vinuta is happy to help Chandru. She takes care of him. She helps everyone in her husband's family as well.

Vinuta represents all Indian women who give away their life taking care of others but get only abuse in return. Aneel Salman, in his article *Ecofeminist Movements—from the North to the South* tells that women have suffered through this for years in silence and feminism presents concern for the same. Indian English novelists have frankly highlighted this concept in their works like:

She trudges along day, silently going her way; she rises despite the strong patriarchal trends, which permeate attitudes and behaviour in a society, entrenched in culture. She breaks the barriers of linguistic, ethnic and cultural complexities and emerges strong willed and more determined than ever.

Shamanna and his wife Gouramma live a well-settled life with two sons and a daughter. Shamanna being a school teacher leads a straight forward life without creating any trouble for him or for others. Gouramma, the mother of Chandru is a clever woman who knows to run the family. She always dreams of diamonds, dollars, big house and servants. The relation between Vinuta and Chandru is snapped abruptly when Chandru is sent to America. Vinuta's peaceful life at her home in Dharwad catapults when Bheemanna, Vinuta's uncle dies of an unexpected heart attack. Vinuta relocates to her aunt's house in Bangalore and joins the same school in which Shamanna Chandru's father teaches.

There is a gender discrimination in employment as well. However, Vinuta works as a teacher and this does not disrupt her personal life. Zafiris Tzannatos in his article *Women and labor market changes in the global economy*, as it is rightly quoted, “nearly two-thirds of women in manufacturing are categorized as labourers, operators and production workers while only a few can be found in the administrative and managerial positions predominantly held by men.”

Vinuta is married to Chandru’s younger brother Girish. In the beginning both Gouramma and Surabhi like Vinuta. However, this changes finally. Gouramma and Surabhi start to dislike Vinuta for her modest background. They treat Vinuta as inferior. They believe that Vinuta has no wealth to bring to their family. So, they treat her like a servant. They treat her coldly and dispassionately.

Chandru who cared for Vinuta changes after reaching America. He becomes more materialistic. According to Chandru, America is capable of satisfying all the basic needs. He admires the people of America and feels excited for being there while he compares with India. He goes to computer classes in the evening time for the betterment of himself. Chandru works hard and he attains success immediately. He gets everything whatever he wants. However, it is not the same in India:

By contrast, in India everything was a hassle. It was, no doubt, a five-thousand-year-old civilization where great kings like Ashoka and Harshavardana had ruled. The land that had been praised by poets and writers in the days of yore had now become home to scarcity and superstition. It was a body weakened by prolonged and painful disease, with its vital organs decayed, its essences sapped. It was not fair to compare the two countries. If one was the

sky, the other was the earth. One was dark, the other incandescent light. (23)

After the death of Bheemanna, Vinuta is adopted by her uncle Rama Rao in Bangalore. She works in government school where Shamanna works in the same school. She is married to Shamanna's younger son Girish. When Chandru finds this, he says that, "Something that he had never imagined was now a harsh reality. The spring Goddess of Dharwad, the girl who had stolen his heart, the Jayanagar school teacher was all the same girl. What a coincidence! What an irony" (43). Here Chandru compares Vinuta with spring.

A daughter-in-law is valued in terms of the wealth she brings. Vinuta is a talented girl. She has a rare talent in music. Her voice resembles the voice of nightingale. However, nobody in the family has time and likings to give it a thought. Only Shamanna is conscious of her qualities but he employs her qualities to earn salary rather than let her raise independently. In the mean-while, Chandru gets married to Jamuna, the only daughter of an affluent property developer Krishnappa in order to get green card in America.

Gouramma as a mother-in-law is partial to her other daughter-in-law Jamuna. It is because; Jamuna is from rich family and has brought lot of dowry. When Jamuna asks Gouramma that she wants to go to her parents home before moving to America, "Gouramma realized that she could not boss over Jamuna the way she did over Vinuta. She told herself it was all right. Her rich relatives had come from all over and there was nothing wrong in Jamuna's decision to go to her parent's home" (53).

Gouramma overpowers Shamanna and Chandru. Since she is blind due to the money and gleaming jewellery that Jamuna brings along with her in marriage. Jamuna and her parents start ignoring Gouramma and other members of the family suddenly

after marriage. Jamuna goes to her father's house and returns only a day before her departure to America. In fact, she has assured to return from her parent's house within a day or two. She declares:

I am leaving for America tomorrow. I feel really sorry that I could not spend time with you and Surabhi. I knew that visa would take a long time, and so I went to meet all my uncles and aunts in Chennai, Delhi and Ahmadabad. The next time I come I will stay for good three months with you. (54)

Gouramma often praises Vinuta, but after Jamuna enters into the house, she starts to praise Jamuna, "Gouramma's conversation usually began with, 'our Jamuna, in America...'. Every day, she would repeat that they were very lucky to have such a daughter-in-law. Paeans of praise were constantly chanted for the unknown and absent Jamuna, and the daughter-in-law was constantly compared" (55). However, Vinuta keeps calm and carries on with her duties. Here calmness of nature is compared to Vinuta. Vinuta is from a middle class family, but Jamuna is not like that. So there is a constant comparison between the daughter-in-laws by Gouramma.

Gouramma desires to fulfil her dreams with Chandru's dollars. Among Jamuna's dollars and Vinuta's selfless devotion, Gouramma finds favour with the dollar and disregards Vinuta's devotion and family bonding which is truly priceless. Vinuta bears the brunt of endless comparisons between her and 'Dollar Bahu'. She starts sneering physically and mentally at these continuous attacks meted out at her. Here, the Vinuta's mental exploitation can be compared with nature exploitation. In the book *Second Sex* Simone de Beauvoir has observed, "As soon as a girl child is born, she is given the vocation of motherhood because society really wants her for

washing dishes which are not really a vocation. In order to get her washes the dishes, she is given the vocation of maternity” (32).

After Jamuna joins her husband, the family starts to search for a bridegroom for Surabhi. When they get a proposal from an NRI groom, Girish and Vinuta make proper investigation and find out that Shekhar is in a live-in relationship. However, Surabhi and Gouramma who have their American dreams blame Vinuta for interfering in their daughter’s life. Surabhi, when her dreams are shattered, complains about Vinuta, “You are jealous of me. Ever since you have come, I have noticed that you create a fight between Amma and Girish. You are doing everything to stop me from going America. Learn from Jamuna. She is so generous and caring” (64).

Surabhi says awful words to Vinuta. Vinuta is shocked and terribly hurt by the words of Surabhi. She tries to control her tears however; it pours down her cheeks. Without wiping down the tears she tells Surabhi, “I have always thought of you as my sister and have wished for your happiness. That was why I took an interest in your marriage and tried my best to ensure your welfare. Now, I know my position, where I stand in your eyes”(65). However, Gouramma and Surabhi stay immersed in their thoughts. This shows their bad attitude towards Vinuta.

Vinuta begins developing inner clash after the wedding of Jamuna. She fights back to cope with and manage her interpersonal issues that occur because of the comparison between Jamuna and her. She is psychologically disturbed by the fears and tries to find compromising plan for her fears. But, she feels all the more in depression. She becomes isolated, helpless and afraid. Girish is not communicative with Vinuta. He does not feel the intensity of pain that Vinuta is undergoing through. “As the day went by, Vinuta shrivelled up, like a flower closing its petals to protect its

soft vulnerable core. But then, life had trained her to live in pain. She did not take long to adjust to the new atmosphere of oppression she felt in the house”(67).

Finally Surabhi’s marriage is fixed with Suresh, a lawyer settled in India. Everyone in the family is making plans for the wedding date to be finalised, the mother-in-law gives preferences to the date given by Jamuna. As Vinuta is pregnant, Shamanna asks his wife to fix a date that is convenient to Vinuta. However, Gouramma has different viewpoints. She says that, “No, that won’t be right. How can we afford to upset Jamuna? We have Thus Jamuna? We have to fix a date convenient to her. You should not meddle in such matters”(68). Here, Vinuta psychologically suffers due to cunning nature of mother-in-law.

Vinuta’s life is miserable, her mother-in-law ill-treats her. However, she takes care of her mother-in-law during her illness. Gouramma gives importance to Surabhi and the dollar bahu, Jamuna. Vinuta breaks her back in taking care of her mother-in-law. She looks after diligently her mother-in-law when she is sick. The patient in the neighbouring bed asks Gouramma that, “Is she your daughter?” Gouramma answered, in all her arrogance, ‘My daughter stays in Hyderabad and my elder daughter-in-law is in America. This is my younger daughter-in-law”(74).The money send by Chandru is more important to her than the love, affection and care given by Vinuta.

During Chandru’s visit to India, he decides to visit Vinuta and her baby. Chandru comes to Dharwad to meet Vinuta, “Chandru went to Vinuta’s house. The garden was the same but not quite as green and colourful as it had been when he had last seen it. That was natural, perhaps, since it did not have Vinu around to lavish care on it” (71). Vinuta expresses her sadness to him. She says, “To be honest with you, there is comparison between Jamuna and me. I don’t want and can’t compete with

anybody. But it is evident that the family does not need me anymore. I'm sorry, but that's the truth" (72).

Both the life of Vinuta and Dharwad undergo changes. Both lose their innocence and charm. Harsha, son of Vinuta starts to walk. He is healthful and sweet as his mother. She becomes skinny and weak like a drooping flower. She looks unhappy and goes about the housework in a listless, machine-like manner. Murty compares Vinuta with a drooping flower. Like neglected plants, Vinuta becomes withered and thin.

Chandru set his heart on the beauty of nature whereas Vinuta lose his way. He loose himself in his materialistic life in America. He works round the clock without bothering about other things in life. His wife Jamuna does not bother him for domestic chores like purchase of vegetables, grocery etc. It is noteworthy that not much communication takes place between Jamuna and Chandru in America. After some days Gouramma goes to America for Jamuna's delivery. Jamuna's behaviour changes totally and it is not accepted by Gouramma. Gouramma is totally confused she expects that Jamuna would welcome her by touching her feet, neatly dressed in a sari, wearing gold jewels. However, she is disappointed with the activities of Jamuna. Gouramma slowly comes to know that America has changed the habits of Jamuna and with this, she consoles herself:

When Gouramma walked up to the front door, she could not believe that the woman who opened the door was indeed her darling Jamuna. Where was the Jamuna whom she had last seen at Surabhi's wedding, in a silk sari, decked in gold and gem-studded ornaments? This Jamuna looked so bare. She looked so strange with her short hair, a

loose gown, and neither a bindi nor her mangalsutra! The only improvement was that her complexion had brightened. (82)

Gouramma is unable to understand the ways of West. At this point in the novel, she is also as miserable as Vinuta. She feels very low and humbled. She also feels humiliated. After the delivery Jamuna says, that her baby must sleep alone. Gouramma finds this strange and she asks her daughter-in-law to reconsider as a small baby cannot sleep alone. But without giving chance to her mother-in-law, Jamuna speaks rudely and shuts the door. When Gouramma asked Jamuna's baby to take oil bath Jamuna replies that, "No. I don't like that sort of thing. It's all right in India. Here the bathing tub will become oily. Everyone will laugh at us. I shall follow the childcare book to raise my baby" (88). Whatever Gouramma says, Jamuna is against to that. However, Gouramma remains to be very caring, loving and affectionate; Jamuna has her own ways of living and nurturing the child. She uses her mother-in-law as a servant to take care of her child.

Gouramma's position in Jamuna's house is no better than that of a pet dog in rich person's bungalow. She is given enough food to eat, money to spend, comfortable room of her own. The only thing she did not get is the freedom of movement and the freedom of expression. She has to seek Jamuna's permission for everything. She says to herself, "In her heart, she was outraged by Jamuna's attitude. She felt though this house was big, it had a small heart. If Vinuta had ever said such a thing, Gouramma would have scolded her till she apologized. But Gouramma did not dare to speak her mind to Jamuna. She was after all a Dollar Bahu".(93).Gouramma is under observation from nook and corner there. This shows domination of woman to another woman on the grounds of wealth.

Gouramma wants to treat Radhakrishna who is a very senior scientist in a reputed company for a lunch at house. His wife Savitri is a traditional lady in her fifties. As soon as she arrives, she bows down to touch her feet. Gouramma cooks food and is very glad to feed the family. This shows her urgency to connect with someone and she is happy to entertain the guest. Gouramma inquires Savitri about her daughter Shama and immediately Savitri starts to cry. She says that Shama is married to a man from India due to their compulsion. First, their life goes well then they have massive fight with each other. He would repeatedly tell her, "I just married you out of sympathy. Go and look at your face." Actually, he had married her only because she was an American citizen. Eventually, they got a divorce." (96). This shows the selfish nature of man and his exploitation of women. Just like, man takes all the natural resource in order to lead a luxurious life.

Gouramma is disturbed on another note as well. She sees her son Chandru sharing the household chores with Jamuna. She tells Chandru not to do work as neither Girish nor his father ever comes to the kitchen. Immediately Jamuna intervenes that, "what's the shame in doing work in your own house, Amma?" Jamuna retorted. 'Now because of Manasi, we have more work. Please do not give such advice'"(103). Gouramma feels hurt and disgraced. These are the harsh words spoke by Jamuna towards her mother-in-law.

Chandru gifts his watch to Surabhi's husband, Suresh which is presented by Jamuna for his birthday. Chandru is well aware that Suresh will never pay money for the watch. However Gouramma would say that he will pay. After Chandru returns to America Jamuna notices his bare wrist. Chandru explains everything to her. Then she flares up and says:

Everyone in your family is greedy. They won't hesitate to strip a person and just grab all they can get from the US. Last time, your mother took away my bag and Surabhi helped herself to my cosmetic kit. They always have one mantra "Anyway you can get it cheaper there." They don't realize that dollars do not grow on trees.(101)

Gouramma is happy to be in America, finds everything to be new. However, she gradually falls out with Jamuna for various reasons. Gouramma observes that Jamuna is not who she thought. She finds Jamuna to be selfish and stingy, "Gouramma had been observing the change in Jamuna's personality. She was such a different person in India, carefree, talkative, a spendthrift. But in the US, she was quieter, calculating and very conscious of her diet. She would drive twenty miles if she could get something for five dollars less" (103).

After six months of Gouramma's arrival in America, Chandru decides to take her mother to New York, to show her another American city. On the drive to New York, Gouramma notices the beauty, "All of nature had spread out its boundary; flowers of a myriad colours were blooming. She thought how lucky she was that her son owned such a beautiful car"(110-111). There Gouramma meets with Padma friend of Jamuna and she is pregnant. Gouramma stays with her. At that time, Padma suffers from the due pain. There is no one to take care of her. She prepares everything by herself. Gouramma thought that:

Such a wealthy country, and a pregnant woman had to go to hospital all alone! No one had to time to accompany her. Everything was just busy with their own lives. Their dedication to their jobs was amazing. But, the flip side was that loneliness was growing. Gouramma is unable to sleep and she prayed for her safe delivery. (119)

Chandru takes Gouramma to Indian Grocery store. There she meets Asha patil who is the owner of the shop. Gouramma starts to converse with her. She likes Asha's straightforward manner and affectionate behaviour. Asha has married a man Satish patil. However, she has an unkind mother-in-law and sisters-in-law. After marriage, the husband's family treat her as a free servant. She loves to live in a house with affectionate mother-in-law and a loving husband. However, everything is vast difference between reality and imagination. She says that, "the house was always noisy, fighting and shouting. I went into depression. My in-laws thought I was acting, that I was being lazy. But one day my father came visit me, realized my state, and took me back to the village"(123).

Gouramma is stunned by Jamuna's rudeness and worries about it. Further, Gouramma finds out that Jamuna has been giving her, all second hand things. Jamuna has been using her as a trash by giving all the used and old things. All the saree and jewellery, Jamuna has gifted Gouramma has been old and used. She is very hurt when she overhears Jamuna speaking to her friends:

Gouramma began sweating. Her Dollar Bahu continued spewing out her real feeling. 'I give them what I don't like and they don't suspect anything. For example, I pass on all my old saris to Surabhi and I tell her, due to customs restrictions, I rewrapped them. They believe me. My mother-in-law cannot understand that should get along with Vinuta who slogs day and night for these people but instead, she praises me. I always believe in divide and rule. (128)

Jamuna is neither embarrassed nor scared, while giving such gifts to her own sister-in-law, because she has never thought of herself as one of the family.

Gouramma feels humiliated. She feels that Jamuna has treated her very badly.

However, this opens Gouramma's eyes. She realises her mistake. She feels bad, "That entire night Gouramma cried, and her wet pillow was testimony to her uncontrollable grief. She misses Vinuta. Now she could finally appreciate that poor girl. She regrets her own attitude towards Vinuta. She felt awful when she remembered that she had treated her in the run-up to Surabhi's wedding" (130).

Jamuna is a foil to Vinuta. Vinuta endures the patriarchy. On the other hand, Jamuna is bold and does not allow others to exploit her. Jamuna represents the adversary to patriarchy. Jamuna is seen moving away from people due to her unresponsive manner. She controls Gouramma. She wishes to be accepted, honoured and worshipped. She displays her wealth to them in order to silence them against her shortcomings.

Jamuna insults Gouramma very often in America. She rejects to take her along with her to the hospital even during the time of her delivery. She disappoints her enthusiasm to carry out puja in her house. She ignores her suggestions on the auspicious and inauspicious moments of the day. Gouramma requests to take the newly born baby in her arms. However, Jamuna disallows her from doing that.

Gouramma is rejected every time. She is disobeyed and her suggestions are ignored. However, Gouramma keeps quiet and let the things be. She is afraid of provoking Jamuna's anger. She endures the ill treatment and insults thrown at her by Jamuna. However, she has lost herself to money and there is no retrieval from it. "By now Gouramma knew what that meant. She felt she was only a servant in her son's house and everything had to be decided by her Dollar Bahu" (127).

There are other female characters in the novel who suffers from male-chauvinism. Shanta is the distance relative of Gouramma and she comes to see her. Gouramma asks her about her daughter Lata and husband Mukund. She informs that

they both are separated. She says that, “Mukund expected that I should be a dutiful wife and also developed a complex because he had to report to me. we had constant fights. As he earned less than me, he would draw money from my account without my knowledge and make merry. That day I came to know, we fought and separated”(132). This show the male ego towards female.

Jamuna feels special because of her money and her independence in America. She can also be seen to be suffering from hyper competitiveness. She is cold and detached not only to Gouramma and Vinuta but towards Chandru as well. Gouramma decides to return to India. When she reaches Bangalore she asks Shamanna that, “America is great but our country is no less. Tell me, how are Vinuta and Harsha? Did they miss me?” (136). Shamanna is stunned by the words of Gouramma.

Vinuta always worries that she has never been a good daughter-in-law in Gouramma’s eyes. She worries that after a year-long stay in America, Gouramma might treat her more like dirt. Shamanna tells Vinuta, “If the woman of the house is unhappy, a family can never live in peace. Vinuta, I do not want you to live with such a complex. Please go away and make your own home” (138). Vinuta is surprise by the words of her father-in-law.

At last, Gouramma understands her mistake and mistreatment of Vinuta. She wants to be with Vinuta and give her affection. She also appreciates the good nature of Vinuta. However, Vinuta has moved from the family home and has started living separately with her husband and son. Gouramma is very regretful, “I have changed a lot, ’Gouramma said sadly. ‘America has opened my eyes and I shall never make that mistake again. Will Vinu and Harsha never come back to this house? Can I not see Harsha ever?’ Gouramma was now in tears”(141).

The character of Vinuta is a symbol of Mother Nature. She is caring, nurturing, selfless, and resourceful. However, just like, man neglects and oppresses nature, Vinuta is also treated unkindly. She is overlooked and exploited. She is the life line for all her family members but, no one realises. However, she remains kind and caring till the end.

The women in the society should be treated equally. Gouramma, Jamuna, Vinuta and Surabhi should not be prevented from expressing their opinions simply because they are women. However, Jamuna is allowed to express her mind. She is heard by others in the family. On the other hand, Vinuta is silenced and neglected like weed. The word *Dollar Bahu* is a metaphor of materialism and consumer culture. However, Vinuta represents the fact that, nature overpowers the Dollar Bahu who represents wealth.

Anupama, another female protagonist from Sudha Murty's novel *Mahashweta* suffers from similar predicament. Like Vinuta, she is also used, abused, and not respected. Both Anupama in *Mahashweta* and Vinuta in *Dollar Bahu* hail from poor families however; absorb with phenomenal characteristics. Anupama is from a poor family, she is always ready to help the poor by conducting charity shows. Vinuta never complains and helps her uncle's as well as her in-law's family. As Anupama takes care of Dr. Satya when he suffers from jaundice, Vinuta cares for Chandru when he has a fracture. Both Anupama and Vinuta silently bear their predicaments without talking ill of their in-laws in public. Anupama could make out Girija's situation and Vinuta also identified the closeness of Surabhi with Gopinath.

However, both Anupama and Vinuta suffer at the hands of their mothers-in-law who are the agents of patriarchal society. They endure and remain patient. Anupama loses her life as she does not have a father-in-law like Shamanna to stand

on her side, but Vinuta is lucky at the end because she is free from magic of her dollars digests mother-in-law.

Vandana Shiva and Maria Mies in their book, *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development* describe that Ecofeminism is regarding the similarity of society's connection with natural world and woman. Ecological destruction and manufacturing ruins is a direct menace to everyday existence. Hence, it is everyone's particular duty to preserve it. Elizabeth Gould Davis writes about the similarity between the women and nature in her book, *The First Sex* (1971):

Man is the enemy of nature: to kill, to root up to level off, to pollute, to destroy are his instinctive reactions.....Woman ... is the ally of nature, and her instinct is to tend, to nurture, to encourage healthy growth, and to preserve ecological balance. She is the natural leader of society and of civilization, and the usurpation of her primeval authority by man has resulted in uncoordinated chaos. (335)

## CHAPTER- IV

### WOMEN AND WEALTH

The primary objective of this chapter is to deal with Sudha Murty's *House of Cards* in the context of ecofeminism. The present chapter tries to divulge the features of ecofeminism through this novel. At present, the society forgets the clear truth of life in which Christianity also believes that human beings are made up of dust and turn to dust one day. God makes a man out of dust and he is a unique and exceptional combination of natural material. The *Holy Bible* illustrates that all mortal lives are dependent on God and Mother Nature has both shaped man and woman in the image of God. This biblical verse also states human equality and liberation, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a companion for him who corresponds to him."

Ecofeminism talks about the relation between human and nature, in the same way, feminism defines the relation between man and woman. As human beings have dominated the Earth and other living and non-living things for the sake of fulfilling their needs and desires, men have also subjugated women for showing their dominance by using them as tools of delight, restricting their social involvement and depriving them of their basic rights. The justification of the title *House of Cards* is the unsteady nature of human relationships in the modern world. It is always said in India that houses are not built just by lifeless bricks, cement, and steel. They are built by trust among the members of the house. If family members are not in mutual love, it becomes an unsteady house of cards, likely to collapse at the slightest thump.

Sudha Murty's *House of Cards* sheds light upon such fragile human relationship. Mridula is the protagonist in the novel, *House of Cards*. The beauty of Nature is compared with Mridula. The novel starts with the description of Aladahalli where Mridula lives. Aladahalli is a small village in north Karnataka with less

population. The villages contain, “It boasted of a beautiful lake with a temple of Lord Hanuman on its shore. The area was dotted with banyan trees is called ‘Aladahalli’ and ‘halli’ means village, so the village was named Aladahalli”(1).

Mridula is a top student in her class. She is unobjectionable, pure at heart, knowledgeable and possesses attractive large twinkling eyes and also long dark hairs on which she wears a string of flowers. Her family is content and well settled, “Bheemanna’s family was rich and owned a lot their fertile land. His ancestral house was very old and large. The green backyard was filled with varieties of plants and vegetables. There were jasmine creepers in the backyard” (1).

Mridula is attracted by the beauty of nature. She spends her time sitting under the banyan tree. The author describes the beauty of nature during Ugadi time, which is the time of New Year for the Kannada people. Murty depicts, “Summer had just arrived. The mango trees sported soft reddish-green leaves and the cuckoos were making lovely coo-coo sounds”(2). The author furnishes a pastoral scene. The environment is alive and glorious. The bird, flowers, and the human inhabitants are all basking in celebration. The villagers are busy preparing for the day. They live close to nature. They care for it. They tend to gardens and carry out the rituals in tandem with nature. It is the city life which has moved away from nature.

Mridula is a hard-working girl in her school days. As a result, her teacher wants her to join courses either in medicine or in engineering to do justice to her talent and diligence. They wish her to go abroad to earn dollars there. She, however, is bent upon becoming a teacher because teaching is her hobby. It is her vocation. This shows that she has a mature head on her young shoulders. Teaching primes her into a wise, thoughtful and selfless woman who teaches about others comforts.

In a patriarchal society, man overpowers and overrules. Cultural movement exposes the deep work and inspiration motivating all forms of supremacy. Then Ecofeminism becomes of massive value as it is not only about protecting trees, animals or soil only because it is consecrated, but fairly for the survival of people, it is needed. In *Healing the wounds: Feminism, ecology, and nature/culture dualism*, As Ynestra King writes:

Yet this is not a sentimental movement--lives depend upon the survival of the forest. For most of the women of the world, interest in the preservation of the land, water, air, and energy is no abstraction but a clear part of the effort to simply survive. (118)

Nature's beauty is compared with Mridula's nature. She thinks that everybody is like her. She possesses enormous enthusiasm for life and unlimited energy for reading, cooking and sketching. Mridula is a bright girl. She is not like everybody; her character seems different when compared to others. She wants to spend her every minute of her day prolifically. Further, she thinks that "It seemed that the sun rose for her and the rainbow colours were meant only for her. Every day was to be lived to its fullest and every beautiful minute to be enjoyed"(2).

Nature helps people in many ways by giving food, shelter, etc. Natural resources are also used as medicine for both animals and human beings. Mridula remembers a conversation with her father when she is a child. Murty tells about nature's helping tendency that, "when an animal in the village feel sick, her family immediately took medicine made from the plants in his garden and treated the animal, without waiting for the animal's owner to call him" (3).

Champa Bai Kamitkar is a seventy years old woman who stays opposite to Bheemanna's house. She is very fond of Mridula. Whenever Champa Bai visits her

sister's home, Mridula takes care of the Garden. Mridula loves the garden very much. She is very happy to take care of the garden. The garden is very dear to Champa Bai. Champa Bai's garden is described:

She had a huge garden in her backyard with lots of flowers. Each plant was as precious as a child to her. Watering the plants and plucking the flowers took her three to four every day. Even though she grew so many flowers, she did not use even one flower, she did not even one for herself. She sent all of them to the other houses on the street. (5)

Mridula enjoys the sound of rain. Once, when she attends one of her friend's wedding, it rains. She is very gleeful and joyous. She likes the rain drop entering inside. Rain brings different emotions to different people. To Mridula, rain is nature's gift. She thinks that "The earth is full of dust and is dry in the summer. Rain settles the dust, washes away the dirt and makes the world green. It inspires creativity in poets and artist, but during a wedding, it only brings tension" (13).

Mridula loves nature in various forms. She likes its soothing and tender nature. She is also very kind and tender by nature. However, her life changes when she meet Sanjay. Mridula is attracted to the young man Dr. Sanjay in a marriage ceremony in Hubli. He is also charmed by her physical attractiveness but feels hateful about the way he has to trust her. Sanjay is passionate about his work. He is tall, with sharp features and not as fair as Mridula. He has curly hairs and his physique is like an athlete. He does not take life so seriously and works with the Government hospital in Bombay initially.

Sudha Murty describes the beauty of the season. In Aladahalli, November and December are considered as the best month. There is no heavy rain and no windy, hot days. She describes, "The sky was clear and the weather pleasant. The full-moon day

was celebrated with great joy and all relatives and friends came together for a moonlit dinner at the side of the lake or in the mango grove” (40-41).

Ratnamma is Sanjay and Lakshmi’s mother. She lives in Narasipura. She is an independent woman. She is a fifty-eight years old widow. She does not take care of her son and daughter. Her main focus is to earn money and develop her business. Sanjay asks her not to work hard that he will send her money. She thinks to herself that, “It isn’t too much work for me, but the truth is that he doesn’t want me to run a small shop. He must think that it is below his dignity. But I don’t worry about such false status symbols” (46). She has a shop that was situated near the temple. She sold, “flowers, incense, camphor, bananas, coconuts, and other puja items. Some pilgrims wanted to take a dip in the river Kaveri since they considered it very auspicious”(44).

The Pilgrims bathing in the river in order to purify their bodies and souls is ironical. They want to become clean at the cost of the pristine nature. This shows how man uses nature to purify and absolve himself. In other words, man uses river to clean him and polluting the river. Likewise, man uses woman to purify his mind by dumping all emotional debris on women, and he becomes clean and calm.

Ratnamma is enterprising and resourceful. She has a honge tree in her house it is planted by her husband for medical use. After his death, it is maintained by Ratnamma. But she prefers to grow pumpkin creepers. According to her growing pumpkin creepers have more advantages. She might throw pumpkin seed wherever she likes and it will grow. She thinks that “A creeper usually started growing without much care. Pumpkin didn’t decay either. So she could keep them for many months in the house. When there were no vegetables in the summer, the pumpkins became expensive”(52).

Ratnamma regrets that if her husband had planted champaka tree instead of the honge tree. It would have helped her to earn money by selling the flowers to the women who worship goddess Gowri. She tells, “I wish I could cut down the honge tree. I can get wood from it. But I’m sure Lakshmi will oppose my decision. She calls the tree “Appa’s tree” and is sentimental about it. She doesn’t understand my difficulties. The best time to cut the tree is when she is not around” (52).

Sanjay and Mridula once again come together accidentally in Bombay where Mridula falls ill during a study tour. Sanjay as a doctor cares for her and nurses her back to good health which helps them strengthen their bond. They stick on to the old social system by taking the permission of their elder’s. Sanjay and Mridula marry with the acceptance of both the family. After marriage, they both decide to settle in Bangalore.

Mridula’s happiness is short-lived. Sanjay quits the government profession and starts a private nursing home. Money brings changes in his behaviour. Once there is a wedding and Mridula wishes to attend both the wedding and the reception. However, Sanjay does not want to and he thinks it beneath him. Sanjay replies, “No, we’ll only go for the reception.’ Mridula was raised to believe that she should not question the elders in the family when they made a decision. So even though she was disappointed, she did not push the matter” (75).

Mridula is helping and very kind. She helps Sanjay by taking up a job. She is thrifty in her ways in order to save money for her husband. She also carefully supports him to do private practice. She is against wasting too much money and she only need is her husband’s happiness. Both of them have taken a loan and to repay it she works dutifully and for long hours. She does not travel by an auto-rickshaw or spend money on stitching blouses. She does not spend money because she wants to build a

financially secure and harmonious future. There is a storm in the Bay of Bengal so there is heavy rain in Bangalore. He sees that “There was a strong wind and a few dried coconuts flew up from the ground; one of them broke the light bulb in their small garden. The cool breeze gushed inside. Though it was pleasant, Sanjay was not at peace”(100).

Vatsala is the wife of Mridula’s brother Krishna. Vatsala and Mridula are not good friends. Vatsala is street smart despite being from a village and considers Mridula as her competitor. Once, Champakka softly tells Rukuma that Vatsala is not good at work when compared with Mridula. Vatsala is selfish and calculating. She is short-temper and dissatisfied with her life. She prefers to stay in the city. She says that “What’s there to do in this village? It’s the same agricultural activity over and over again, sow the seeds, reap the harvest, store the grains and get the fertilizers” (104).

Mridula’s calmness is compared with Nature. She has a mature mind from her young age. Whenever Sanjay is distressed by the hospital politics, she helps him overcome the feeling of restlessness in him. Mridula works as a remedy to Sanjay’s ailments. She knows that Sanjay would be lost without her moral support. She is therefore practical in domestic affairs. When Sanjay is unjustly transferred from Bangalore to Belur, she courageously looks after her son, herself and also her husband and builds more confidence in him.

Mridula’s sacrifices can be compared with nature’s selfless qualities. Mridula sacrifices herself for the wellbeing of her family. She maintains considerable respect for herself and Sanjay in their married life. She is careful about her husband’s reputation. She does not want to endanger Sanjay’s reputation by borrowing money from friends and relatives. She tells Sanjay, “Sanjay, I have gold jewellery that my parents gave me during our wedding. I don’t wear much gold anyway. I can sell it. I’ll

ask Appa for some money too. We can borrow the remaining amount from the bank. But we will not take any money from Alex” (128).

Mridula is ready to give away the little jewellery she has received from her parents during her wedding in order to support Sanjay. She knows that it is only small portion of the wealth which she can keep for herself. However, Mridula does the ultimate sacrifice. Her parents are not very rich, yet she manages to borrow three lakh rupees from her father for the construction of a hospital.

Mridula’s love and affection is compared with nature. Once Mridula visits Aladahalli where she notices, everything has changed a lot in the last decade. The garden has also changed. There is no Jasmine creeper any more. Instead, there are wood roses and croton flowers. Mridula goes to see Champakka’s garden. She inquires Champaka about all the colourful flowers are gone and only Mehendi is there in the garden. Champaka replies, “Don’t talk about the garden, Mridula. It hurts me. After you married and went away, no one cared for it anymore. You used to tend to it was your child. But your sister-in-law Vatsala doesn’t bother” (131).

The changes in Champakka’s garden symbolise changes in Mridula’s life. Just like the garden, Mridula life has also undergone many changes. She has lost the charm of her youth and grown into an elderly woman before time. She is so much burdened by responsibilities that she has lost her smiles. However, her visit to her native village revives her spirit. She comes out from Champakka’s house, she does not go home. She goes inside the Hanuman temple and starts singing a song. The cool breeze from the lake makes her happy. Murty portrays that, “It was Ugadi time, in February or March. Summer had just arrived. The mango trees sported soft reddish-green leaves and the cuckoos were making lovely cocoo sounds” (132).

Lakshmi is a different female character in the novel. She is Sanjay's sister. She is selfish and ungrateful. Lakshmi needs thirty lakhs to come out of a hard situation. Rosemary manages all accounts of the nursing home properly. Mridula informs her mother-in-law about the needs of thirty lakhs for Lakshmi however; she says that she does not want to interfere. Mridula agrees to help Lakshmi in her tough times. However, when she seeks her husband's permission he replies in negative:

Mridula, we don't have that kind of money. I've lived in their house for two years and seen how they live. They show off too much. I don't want to give them a loan because they'll never return it. If Shankar agrees, I can give him a job at the nursing home with a monthly salary. But they must stay separately and not in our house. I can't help them more than this. That's my final say. (139)

Mridula is a dutiful wife who obeys her husband. However, she is unable to cope up with Sanjay's neglect of her. She is very upset that he has begun to leave Mridula out of all his decisions. She feels like a third person. She is unhappy and grows discontent in her life. Sanjay's decision to employ Lakshmi's husband in his hospital upsets her. It also upsets her because Sanjay did not even think to consult Mridula in this matter. She is miserable:

Mridula kept quiet. She was upset because Sanjay had not asked for her opinion and had made a unilateral decision. For the first time, she felt uneasy in her marriage. It was not wise to bring a person like Shankar into their nursing home and expose their finances to a relative. Moreover, if they started staying in the same city, then it may lead to misunderstandings later. Mridula retreated to the kitchen and started cooking so that she did not have to think about it anymore. (139-140)

Exploitation of Nature is compared with the character of Anita. She is the wife of Alex and also a good friend of Mridula. She is straightforward, generous and very affectionate. Whenever they both start to talk Anita touches the heart of Mridula. But after some days things get changed. There is a problem between both Alex and Anita. Mridula asks about their problem and she replies that, “Mridula, do you know that when men get more money than they need, their wife starts looking ugly to them? They think that they could have done better. They forget that they were nothing when their wife married them and that she has stayed loyal to them through their ups and downs”(148).

Mridula’s calmness is compared with the tranquil quality of Nature. Sanjay makes fun of Mridula’s monthly income not remembering its crucial role in shaping his life in the past. He mocks at her wise suggestions to be thoughtful to his patients. He dishonestly hides his immoral medical practices in the hospital from his wife. Sanjay ignores her; slowly he begins to hide things from her. Later on, he starts to lie with her about hospital management. In the end, superiority takes him over. These entire changes result in an unbridgeable gap between the two husbands and wife. Mridula has no place in his busy time:

He came home and joined his family for dinner. This was the only time he spent with Shishir. He talked to him about everything and advised him on his future. Mridula did not play an important role anywhere in Sanjay’s life. Rosemary assisted Sanjay in the hospital, Shankar managed the accounts, Sakamma did the cooking and Shishir entertained him. Sanjay hardly ever took a holiday and when he travelled abroad, it was only for business. Sanjay did not ask Mridula

what she did during the day or about her family at Aladahalli. As far as he was concerned, the small talk was a waste of time. (150)

Mridula gives lessons to his son to save money for hard times. Sanjay always takes the side of his son even if he is dishonest. Sanjay teaches his Son how to earn money and further tells that how money is the weakness of most people. This attitude of Sanjay is also misleading to Mridula. She argues with her husband not to teach the wrong things to her son because her background is different than her husband and tells him that her son would be lost. She becomes agitated and very sensitive due to the insulting talk of her son and her husband. If her son Shishir does not like the homemade food, he eats outside, his father also asks him to eat outside. Sanjay spoils his son by teaching him the wrong values of life.

Shishir starts to rebel against his mother but not his father. Mridula teaches honesty and hard work to her son and he shares and acclimatizes those things with her. Mridula is unhappy with the extravagant ways of son and husband. Sishir buys fifteen shirts and asks Sanjay weather he likes the shirts. Mridula is upset and scolds Sishir not to waste the money. At that time Sanjay raises his voice and says not to scold Sishir. Mridula feels hurt. She is greatly disappointed and thinks:

The relationship between a son and a mother is very different from that between a daughter and mother. When the daughter becomes a young woman, she becomes a friend to her mother but son becomes a stranger. Sishir looked like his mother but his voice, mannerisms, and thinking was Sanjay's. He was not attached to anyone and not idealistic at this young age. (154)

Mridula stands for honesty, sacrificial and dedication. Her son looks down upon her as a middle-class housewife who is incompetent of grasping the spirit of a new

world. Sishir asks Mridula to be sportive like his father. Sanjay laughs at Sishir's words. He is aware that, "he could be rude to others but not to his son. A son is a shady tree in old age and parents must take care of the tree when it is a sapling" (157). Here, Murty compares Mridula with the tree. Woman as a mother is good towards her children. A mother forgives her children.

Mridula's Nurture is compared with the Nature. Her son Shishir does not mind for his mother because he has always seen her as a middle-class pay earner. He buys garments, electronic gadgets, furniture and food items at excessive rates without thinking much about their need in life. When Mridula tries to explicate to him the importance of good habits, he makes a mockery of her profession. He thinks like any other man, about money and objectification of woman's body. He mocks:

Amma was so beautiful when she was young. Had she been taller, she could have entered the Miss India pageant. She has wasted her beauty by becoming a teacher and housewife. Had I been in her place, I'd have pursued modelling and probably made more money than dad and taken less time than him. She could have become a lady doctor and joined dad and they could have built many more nursing homes together. Amma would have been also famous. She spent so much energy on teaching children in Government schools. (159)

Lakshmi is a squanderer; she competes with the members of the ladies club. Sanjay's sister Lakshmi suffers humiliation, encounters jealousy and cunningness in the joint family. Mridula says to Sanjay about Lakshmi that his sister puts all her money in chits. She wears the jewels, which is worth ten lakhs and says to her that it is artificial.

Mridula is duped by her own husband, Sanjay. Mridula grows suspicious of her husband and his sister. She eventually discovers Sanjay's lies. However, when she confronts her husband, he denies everything. At that time Sanjay asks Mridula to see a psychiatrist. Mridula feels hurt and says that "what a reward I get for saving for our future! I should've been a spendthrift instead"(170). Sanjay does not want to convince his sobbing wife and leaves the room. She thinks that money has taken their good relationship away.

Sanjay begins to play a game with Mridula for no particular reason. Money brings arrogance in him which tore him from Mridula. He imbibes philosophy and said, "Nothing is black or white in this world. The cow gives milk for its calf. But we drink that milk. Isn't that wrong? Trees have life. But we cut them and use their wood. Isn't that wrong too? Mosquitoes and bugs are also creatures. Don't we kill them because they trouble us? Big fish always eats the small fish. Is that wrong?"(176). Mridula is dumbstruck by Sanjay's arguments. Here Sanjay tells that except human beings others are lifeless.

Mridula is extremely hurt by the changes in Sanjay's attitude towards her and to his profession. She tries to fix things out with him however; it unnecessarily ends in unexpectedly shameful response from Sanjay. He laughs at her old fashioned philosophy. He mocks her ignorance about the changes in the global scenario. She has lost all her self-confidence and, anger. She also feels shocked and annoyed. She is unable to believe that her faithful husband Sanjay has cheated her. He has inculcated impatience in her.

Mridula's good nature and love is rewarded by betrayal and disappointment. Mridula has lived with complete belief and trusts in him from the first day of the marriage. He acts like a honest husband however; he has stabbed her in the back. In

marriage, she has trusted a stranger, marries him with his disability of short arm. There were excitement and exhilaration that entered her soul. It was the most joyous kind of bond with him, but the bond and the trust had been ruptured by him and the crack followed. At that moment she realized the selfishness and the materialistic qualities of him.

However, today this patriarchal society has distorted this verse, instead of life and unites in love and concord which is natural; they exploit the woman and nature. Now humankind has become foolish garbage. They ruin everything by breaking and consuming this earth in the name of religion and caste. Man is trained to make ample of money through corruption, bribe, and misdeed. Unfortunately, he is far away from earning honest money which entails hard work and sweat.

Mridula loses her faith and trust in Sanjay. Mridula shifts her bag and baggage to the guest room and locks the door from inside. She bursts out into tears all the time and isolates herself. She stops feeling hungry as well. She wants to talk to someone in order to lower her burden however; there is nobody to talk to her. Mridula opens up with Anita. Anita is her good friend. Mridula pours her heart to Anita:

Anita, it is not about money. Money can be earned and lost. It is about faith that a wife has in her husband. That's more valuable than money and gold. Faith sustains marriage and brings joy to the family. Without it 'we have nothing. How can Sanjay destroy the faith and trust I had in him? (186)

Even when Sanjay learns about Mridula's emotional state, he does not care enough. He thinks that he earns money and possesses the full power. The cardinal principle of life was defeated by Sanjay. Leigh K. Cunningham a lawyer and author of Australia illustrate, "Trust is something that is difficult to establish. It is very fragile

that needs to be taken care of. Once trust breaks or shatters into pieces, it is very difficult to rebuild it”.

Kantamma advises her that good and bad times are part of life and women must have gentleness in all situations. She traps in her marriage, defrauded by her companion. She associates the relaxation technique classes, in which she is instructed that the main reason for unhappiness is a disappointment. She becomes acquainted with dissatisfaction that disappears with detachment. Mridula is more sentimental and she needs more time to be conscious of the real world.

Mridula’s student, Vani requests her to visit a psychiatrist Dr. Rao thrice a week. He tries to explain and understand her problem. She also shares all the things with him. Dr. Rao teaches her not to worry about his husband and not to expect anything from him. According to her husband, she is an idealist. He always mocks her and dominates her. This affects her confidence horribly. He also does not know that she has lost faith in her. When she asks him about the importance of money in life, He elucidates:

Yes, money is important in life. It’s a change triggering catalyst.

Money brings power, status, and confidence. Money brings out the best and the worst in the people. It’s a magnifying glass. When a person becomes rich, his inner desires are free to come to the forefront.

If a selfish man becomes rich, he spends money on himself, but if a generous person becomes wealthy, he shares it with others. It’s difficult to find people who aren’t touched by money. (213)

In Indian society, patriarchy and women oppression is omnipresent. During another session, Mridula says to Dr. Rao that she respects her brother’s wife, Vatsala, however; she is not friendly with her. Her sister-in-law, Lakshmi does not respect her.

Doctor replies, “In India. When you marry a person, you also marry his family. By default, expect you to adjust to the husband’s family. When a girl becomes a daughter-in-law, she’s subjected to unnecessary criticism, irrespective of her good qualities”(213).

Mridula decides to leave Sanjay. So she gets transfer to Aladahalli. Sanjay asks for the reason but she refuses to say. She says that she would buy Champakka’s house with her money. Sanjay is shocked. At last, she said:

There was neither anger nor disappointment in Mridula’s voice. She said, No, I have spent twenty-five of my most important years with you, and yet, I never felt like I belonged to you or your family. I’m still an outsider. My father’s house now belongs to Vatsala and I don’t want to be a burden on my brother and her. Sishir is independent and you can take care of him better than I can. My duty towards both of you is over. I have fulfilled all of my duties as a wife, mother, and daughter-in-law. Now, I want to live for myself. I have my job, my school, and my village. You don’t worry about me any longer. You and Sishir can visit me whenever you want. (218)

Mridula’s exploitation is compared with nature. She becomes depressed and nervous and leaves her husband’s house forever. She had her job, her school and her Hubli village. Sanjay’s life becomes very difficult in Mridula’s absence; he does not sleep properly, nor eats properly, he seems to become an orphan living by himself. He gets a lesson from Rosemary and Joseph’s love counting happiness from a single bouquet. Anita takes the side of Mridula and talks on the phone to Sanjay. She says:

I’ve Known Mridula well for the last twenty-three years. She’s shared all our difficulties. Your mother or sister or son can’t take her place.

Shishir will marry and have his own family. After that, a father is just a guest. Regarding your mother, the less said the better. Your sister just looks for a chance to make money off of you. Nobody can match Mridula in terms of simplicity, innocence, and affection. I'm sorry that I have taken the liberty to speak so much about your personal issues. But I have to listen to my conscience. (222)

Sanjay is convinced from the frank talk of Anita and is taught a good lesson. He realises that his sister is a selfish lady who only talks to him only about money. She is not involved in his brother's personal life. Shankar her husband also says bad words about Mridula that she is an useless and a village girl. They talk about Mridula since it is Sanjay's fault that he talked about her in front of them. His son Shishir also expects his wife to live as a subordinate. The bride Neha does not agree to live as a doormat.

Marriage is not the final destination for her. She wants an equal partnership in marriage and no the subordination of the wife. He thinks of her mother and that she is an ideal woman. Mridula suffers and has sacrificed her life and remains as an insignificant person. She is aware of the criticism made by her husband. She goes away to free herself from the emotional obligation. She feels that it is good to be lonesome and happy than to be with someone who makes her feel inferior, undesirable and inadequate.

Mridula is truthful, kind and bold. Honesty in Mridula is not the mark of any particular class nor it relates to her parents however; it is her inborn quality. However, her husband has always neglected her and takes her for granted. Without her help, he will not have built up a domain. He not even thanked her who has made his money more precious. He tells that he become successful by his hard work, not with anyone's

help. His son Shishir reminds him that his home is not built of four walls however; the person inside the house. Each partner has to play a role to keep the marriage boom. The break of trust makes her paralyzed and she rescues herself. In *Betrayal of sacred Trust*, Stuart Y. Barbara mentions that:

The success of a marriage depends on the effective working together of both husband and wife, because each has specific responsibilities set out by God for the permanence and quality of the marriage. Still, the factor of responsibility in the marriage for husband and wife must not be interpreted as a gender-marked-role-identity. Rather, it is an integral aspect of the relationship mandated by God since creation, for harmony and stability in the home. (31)

Calmness of Mridula can be compared with nature. Sanjay realizes his mistake and runs to take her back. In Hubli; Mridula is noticed swinging with a free mind without any oppression during the Ugadi time. She is not like everybody however; she is different. She thinks to live every day to the fullest and enjoyed every beautiful minute. The result of betrayal changes her. Within a minute she notices that Sanjay holds the swing with his good arm trying to connect himself in the healing process to restore trust. He has come back to take his wife with him.

In Kamala Markandaya's, *Nectar in a Sieve*, Rukhmini gets married to Nathan when she is just nine years old child and Nathan is nearly twenty-five. Nathan is a complete moron and Rukhmini is smart with lots of practical knowledge. The couple is a perfect mismatch, however; they don't break away from each other. Sanjay and Mridula are well-match in age, talent, profession when they get married based on their love. Yet unlike Nathan and Rukhmini they get annoyed with each other and were ultimately separated. Sudha Murty believes in the spirit of sacrifice in relation. She

doesn't disapprove the role of love in marriage. However, the important aspect is the need for the success of the relationship.

Mridula's heart melts for Sanjay and she decides to dedicate her life to him. She shares Sanjay's simplicity, honesty and integrity by continuously showering her love and affection on him. She has chosen to marry him in spite of his defect because he has not hidden it from her. His honesty has impressed her. Even when she knows that life after marriage is battle, she is ready to fight it out with the help of Sanjay. Her son looks down upon her as a middle-class housewife who is weak of grasping the spirit of the new world. Even he does not consider her fit for advice, "He did not care for his mother's words when she told him that he should go to bed early and wake up early too. Instead, he got irritated and said, 'Amma, stop it. You and I have different opinions'"(156).

Mridula holds a social sense from her adolescent to her womanhood. Her village doesn't have medical conveniences. She completes a special training in first aid treatment and gives tetra vaccination to the injured people and pregnant ladies. She works as an unpaid helper in a maternity home for the safe delivery of village women. When Sanjay begins his hospital, she advises Sanjay to afford free services to slum persons and treatment at discount rates to poor patients. Her roots in the soil are so deeply maintained that financial success in the latter part of their life doesn't blind her

All human beings are not pure in heart, some are liars and some are selfish. Mridula loves her husband in all circumstances, and walks with him on the thorny path of success. But her husband Sanjay stands as an noxious invader who hurts her. Sanjay never bridges with Mridula with true feelings. He is the boss, he has the big

ego of success and he never establishes good communication with her. This shows his destructive nature of infidelity.

Mridula struggles with reason and emotion. It happens due to the difference in genes, upbringings and the environment in which they had grown up. The inculcated values, the different cultures and different economic status of their families make her suffer at her husband's hand. Heartless judiciousness, manipulation, and power destroy a marital relationship and the house built insubstantially gets dreadfully collapsed. The same happens to nature as well. Man exploits nature disregarding its values. They use nature and forget to care for it.

In this context, Gita Mehta discovers her views on subordination, exploitation, and domination of women by Patriarchal society through her work, *A River Sutra*, "The city is owned by men, who believe every human being has price, and a full purse of power... we are only women... they throw cigarettes cases, watches and dirty bank notes at our feet as we dance..." (167-168).

## CHAPTER- V

### CONCLUSION

The present concluding chapter brings forth the analysis carried out in the three core chapters. The selected novels, *Gently falls the Bakula*, *Dollar Bahu*, *House of Cards*, depict the connection between women and nature. All over the world, the treatment given to women is same from the time immemorial. In *Ecofeminism: Linking Theory and Practice*, Janis Birkeland studies the role of woman and nature in the Bible, discovers the miserable condition and struggles of a woman against the attitude of conservative society and culture. She also explores how women smash male domination for their own identities. She says, “We cannot end the exploitation of nature without ending the human oppression and vice versa” (19).

Humanity is an essential part of nature. In ancient times, nature and women have been worshipped respectfully. Human beings directly depend on nature for everything. However, patriarchy and male-dominated society has damaged this connection. The longing for development separates humans from nature. This process continues to widen the gap between them. Hence, the golden age is gone, where there is a sense of balance between nature and humankind and individuals respect the natural resources too. Mother Nature is also connected with cultural frame of gender, as Carolyn Merchant in *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology and the Scientific Revolution observe*:

There is no simple relationship between how nature has been gendered both positively and negatively as a female over past two and half millennia, and the roles of women in society. Nature has been revered as an animate mother, feared and degraded as an unpredictable witch, and ploughed as virgin land. Yet forces such as the socialization of

women as caretakers and nurturers, the degradation of women's livelihoods and bodies, and the double burden borne by women as workers and homemakers in capitalist, socialist and colonized countries have often propelled them to act to preserve both non-human nature and themselves. (1)

There is a strong bond between women and the natural environment. Human beings worship nature in the form of goddess and women can resemble the imagery of the goddess. However, patriarchal society controls and abuses the women in the name of traditional and cultural rules. Even the fertility of women links to the fertility of the Earth and their satisfying abilities. It means in many cultures, women are the living donors and the great conservators of nature by birth. As they both give life, they both have to tolerate pain, as plowed, pierced, and dug. They give unconditional and selfless love to their children and their future generation. Nonetheless, both women and nature become the victims of overexploitation and destruction.

As women and Nature has an ancient bond between them, it is known that the depression of women leads to the destruction of nature. In order to gain liberty, various type of domination that subjugates women and Nature must be identified and removed. In *New Woman New Earth*, Rosemary Ruther writes:

Women must see that there can be no liberation for them and no solution to the ecological crisis within a society whose fundamental model of relationships continues to be one of domination. They must unite the demands of the women's movement with those of the ecological movement to envision a radical reshaping of the basic socio-economic relations and the underlying values of this society. (222)

Ecofeminism needs to replace conceptual schemes, practices, and hypothesis to adopt women and feminine nature. As Nature and Women are powerful and indomitable, man plans false means to overcome them. Rather than acknowledging their power and reputation, a man tries to spot their gentle qualities and hides their actual dignity. He centres on the beauty of women and proclaims that their survival is only to satisfy him. He begins abusing women for her biological dissimilarity and dominates nature in name of reason. Karen J. Warren, in *Ecofeminist Philosophy*, opines that:

If women are to rekindle the connection with nature and use their intuitive power and unite in sameness', there might be a chance of influencing a meaningful change in the current modern system to one that is appreciative of nature as an equal and divine authority.

The opinion related to feminism is not new, even Mary Wollstonecraft, in her book, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* discussed the psychic life of women as a critical element in their subordination and liberation. Feminism refers to the works and objection of women to create equality between men and women in the context of their rights, freedom, and self-identity for the betterment and universal development of society. In 1980, When Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, addressing the *All India Women's conference* said:

I have often said that I am not feminist, yet in my concern for the privileged, how can I ignore women who since the beginning of the history, have been dominated over and discriminated against in social custom and in-laws...? Even in the west, so-called freedom of women is often equated with imitation of a man. Frankly, it seems to be a kind of bondage for another. To be liberated, a woman must feel free to be

herself, not in rivalry to man, but the context of her capacity and her personality. We need women to be more interested, more alive and more active...?

In this context, the present research is a thoughtful and sincere effort to explore the relationship between woman and nature through the study of Sudha Murty's novel, *Gently falls the Bakula*, *Dollar Bahu*, and *House of Cards*, respectively. Besides the critical scrutiny of the select novels of Sudha Murty, the study finds that there is a profound element of ecofeminism as well as difficulties of women, gender inequality, subjugation and violence, identity crisis, and modernity.

The chief protagonist of the select novels are women. These women are always in quest for identity and they succeed in finding it. Most of the characters reveal a positive and optimistic way of life. They appear to be sensible and understanding individuals. This study examines the selected novels that add new scope to the ecofeminism discourse.

Therefore, in this entire research work, the researcher has tried to examine the concept of ecofeminism, the theory of ecofeminism, its application in the selected novels. The research also analyses woman and nature interface, their association, how women and the natural world is the victim and sufferer. The women characters are examined in the light of ecofeminism.

Many women novelists writing Indian fictions in English focus on the women and nature to voice their concerns for globalization and manipulation of women and nature. There are writers such as, Vandana Shiva, Medha Patkar, Mahaswetadevi, Arundhati Roy, Gita Mehta, SohailaAbdulali, C.K. Janu, Anita Desai, Sarah Joseph, Kiran Desai and many more. Their works highlight the relationship of women with the environment and provides theory, observation, protests, and activism. In the three

novels, *Gently falls the Bakula*, *Dollar Bahu*, and *House of Cards*, the main protagonists women – Shrimati, Vinuta and Mridula struggle throughout their life with the society they live in, only due to their feminine characters and qualities.

In the novel, Sudha Murty explores the women issues such as anguish, sorrow, extramarital affairs, problematic marital relationship, male domination and woman harassment, woman's physical, emotional and mental mistreatment. All the women characters in the novels try to seek their own identity as an individual and they have indomitable courage to come out from the patriarchal limitation and stand against the male dominance system. Other minor female characters become the victims of domination and exploitation of patriarchal society and system as well.

All the female characters in these novels seek refuge in the embrace of nature and find serene life. The most fascinating thing about these characters is that despite a domineering patriarchal system and society, they make efforts to discuss their silence and freedom. It also depicts that with the support and encouragement, women can be stronger than men with experience.

Today the relationship between Nature and women becomes more prominent. At present war has become necessary like the battle against the earth, women's bodies, local economy, and against democracy. It is essential to glimpse into the connection among all practices which include harm to women and nature. Liberty of women and earth and humanity is essential to bring peace to the world. One of the famous Ecofeminist Maria Mies in *Ecofeminism* says:

We are not responsible for this destructive technology. We do not want it. Let those men or those patriarchs who are so enthusiastic about their technological dominance over nature now clear up the mess. We are fed up with being the world's housewives.

Evidently, the whole world has entered into a new period, however, till today the women continue to be oppressed, exploited and ill-treated in most of the part of the society. Ecofeministic writings and research would bring about the change in the condition of women as well as the environment. It is essential to understand that both nature and women are the life lines of the world.

Sudha Murty portrays the efforts of sensitive, educated, modern women and their rebel for transformation to their own lives as well as others. A wave of the awareness of women and nature is present in these novels. To promote gender equality and to eliminate the bias of women based on gender bias and dominance through violence, it is very important to change the psychology of society towards women from a grass-root level which is only possible by giving proper education and moral values to children by parents and teachers. Indeed women have achieved success in the last few decades, however; if there is to be a true women empowerment, much to be done. To be brief, by providing their deserved rights, women can change their silenced nature into a brave and confident voice.

All the women protagonists of the novels such as Shrimati, Vinuta, Mridula and other minor characters too bear the oppression of man and becomes the victims of dishonour, suffering, mental, and physical torture from Patriarchal system. All these protagonists are chaste, tender, kind and caring. They live and care for nature. They tend to their surroundings and their families.

The selected novels for the study, *Gently Falls the Bakula*, *Dollar Bahu*, and *House of Cards* have lot of scope for further research. These novels portray corporate culture and therefore, a corporate cultural study can be carried out in these novels. Further, as these novels are set both in provincial towns and metropolitan cities, a metropolitan reading of these novels can be carried out. A psychological reading of these novels will make a good study.

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