

# Theme of Identity and Realization in Sudha Murty's Novel - Gently Falls the Bakula

Sudha Naikar

Research Scholar, Department of English, Karnatak University Dharwad

Email ID: [sudhanaikar1993\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:sudhanaikar1993[at]gmail.com)

**Abstract:** *Sudha Murty a prolific writer who is known for her simplicity, she has been greatly revered for her writings, her philanthropy, and her impact on society. She has been dynamic, revolutionary, strong, and obedient, decision and life style. A prolific writer in English and Kannada, she has written in variety of literary forms such as novels, technical books, travelogues, collection of short stories, collections of non-fiction pieces and books for children. And, over the years, she has played the multiple roles of an engineer, author, philanthropist, homemaker, and many more. Main thrust of her writing is the deep psychological upheavals in the minds of Indian youth in the age of globalization. Sudha Murty has inspired millions of men and women across the world for multiple reasons. She has inspired everyone with her simplicity in a world obsessed with luxuries, thought-provoking parenting lessons, and her acts of kindness towards humanity during the tough times. Because of these characteristics, she has received respect and honour. Her books have been translated into all the major Indian languages and have sold over three lakh copies around the country. She was the recipient of the R. K. Narayan's Award for Literature and the PadmaShri in 2006.*

**Keywords:** Love, Marriage, Bakula, Ambition, Sacrifice

## 1. Introduction

*Gently Falls the Bakula* is the story about a young couple Shrikant and Shrimati, and the changes they come across when Shrikant walks up the corporate ladder to the peak of success, while his married life slowly loses the charm and identity. With a magnificently straight way of writing, this book brings a simple but heart-touching story of a couple and the events that shake their family life.

## 2. Literature Survey

It is a story of a marriage loses into its way as a ambition and self interest take there hold. It is her first novel which remains startlingly relevant in its scrutiny of modern value and work ethics.

## 3. Methods

Descriptive and analytical method has been used to understand Sudha Murty's works. Along with this an attempt has been made to apply critical theories to certain approach and aspects that it required.

## 4. Discussion

It is about the problems faced by the protagonist of the story, Shrimati which every Indian woman will feel accustomed to it in one or the other way. Not every story has a happy ending, not every story is like our fairy tales, there are stories in real life which have a sad ending when the love dies and feeling of sacrifices and ego develops between two partners.

In this novel *Gently falls the Bakula* deals about the concept of what is more important in life?-A successful career or a happy marriage? The protagonist Shrimati's marriage loses her ambition and her self-interest takes her by playing upper hand. Shrimati realizes it does not break but she gathers

courage to realize her own unpursued area. Written nearly three decades ago, SudhaMurty's first novel remains startlingly relevant in its scrutiny of modern values and work ethics. Especially in the understanding of life & career challenges between husband and wife.

Shrikant has always been attracted towards Shrimati, his school-companion, and after Shrimati also realises having fallen in love with Shrikant, both get married. After Shrikant joining an IT company, he dedicates his entire focus on being successful in climbing the career ladder. Shrimati dilutes her own aspirations and stays back at home supporting Shrikant. Shrikant has turned into a successful corporate person while Shrimati has been with him in his journey.

The life of both was fine until one day Shrimatirealises while speaking to an old professor about what she had missed in her life. In the modern mundane work-style, she realizes that she has lost her own identity, while just remaining the wife of a successful man. This story of Shrimati's confession to her inner emptiness and the extraordinary presentation of the dark side of corporate lifestyle is the main theme of the book.

The story in the novel starts with the two main characters Shrikant and Shrimati who are neighbors in a village near Hubli. They both were shown as cut throat competitors in schools and later their story turned into a teenage romance. Though, they were neighbours there was a history of rivalry between Shrimati and Shrikant's families. But their love kept blooming like the bakula flowers on the bakula tree which stand tall between Shrikant and Shrimati's bedroom. After their schooling, Shrimati decided to study History and Literature at a local college, Shrikant got selected at IIT Bombay as Engineer and their love story turned into a series of love letters which they wrote to each other.

Shrikant got a job in Bombay and Shrimati got an offer to study History in America by Professor Collins. Shrikant gets

Volume 10 Issue 12, December 2021

[www.ijsr.net](http://www.ijsr.net)

Licensed Under Creative Commons Attribution CC BY

his job offer at Bombay whereas Shrimati had to decline the offer to study abroad so that she could move to Bombay with her husband Shrikant. This really highlights patriarchy and how it is sustaining through the ages. Shrimati sacrificed her passion for history only because she was married to Shrikant.

Shrikant, who had now entered the corporate world was so self-loathed in his progress that, he was now taking Shrimati for granted. Shrimati, was also being ill-treated by Gangakka (Shrikant's mother) and was feeling dreadful and lonely in the crowded city of Bombay. Shrikant was always exhausted by his corporate job and had no time to keep his marriage life lively and active.

Shrimati had never even imagined her subtle, beautiful and modest life in Hubli would change into loneliness and dark days in Bombay. Moreover, Shrikant's affection for Shrimati would deteriorate with days passing by, fights and arguments started taking place between them. Shrimati was tired of her dreadful life in Bombay and decided to look after her first love, History because her second love Shrikant was diminishing. She contacted Professor Collins who had proposed her to study History in Asian university in America. Eventually, Professor Collins proposed the same offer for her but this time Shrimati had made up her mind to follow her long cherished dream. The story classically ends, Shrimati leaving India and Shrikant not able to change anything about it.

The Bakula flower which was signified as the symbol of love between Shrimati and Shrikant had fallen gently as the title says 'Gently Falls the Bakula'. The novel, is a tale of a marriage getting failed due to lack of time, communication and self-pride. Shrimati chose to pursue her dreams. Though, the story ends at a sad note, the end of the novel totally gives justice to the title.

This novel deals with the old stereotype example of male dominance, submissiveness of women, women empowerment, gender disparity and mean mentality. The novel highlights how one needs to give equal importance to work and family. While pursuing ambitions and fulfilling individualist dreams, one must not go so far ahead that they end up leaving behind their family and loved ones.

Gently falls Bakula can be seen and consolidated as a having the theme of identity and realization in the novel. The woman protagonist realizes that we women always are ready to become sacrificial goals by claiming our roles as successful wives, submissive life partners, victims of societal expectations in the garb of marriage wedlock, which is very often considered as taken for granted. But Shrimati realizes the urge and opportunity to fulfill her long cherished dreams which she had sacrificed at the altar of her husband's career and marriage.

## 5. Conclusion

But the realization comes to her by way of identity crisis and inadequacy of being a woman. Unable to realize her dreams the situation has come now to choose between achievement of realizing her dreams in contrast to the submissive

acceptance of present life as house wife and meek woman who allows to shape her destiny she doesn't break but emerges as a strong new woman with the awakening of her identity as an individual and an empowered woman.

## References

- [1] Murhy, Sudha. *Gently Falls the Bakula*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2008.

## Author Profile



**Sudha Naikar** Research Scholar, presently pursuing Ph. D in English Literature in the Karnatak University Dharwad and published two articles.