



26

DOLLAR BAHU: A PROFICIENT DOCUMENTATION OF THE INDIAN VALUE HERITAGE

Dr. Manasi Gangadhar Swami

Associate Professor,

Department of English,

Jawahar ASC College, Anadur, Dist. Dharashiv,

MS, India

Abstract:

The present article intends to discuss the Indian values and changes occurred in it during the modern times and it underlines the importance of India's value heritage in the modern times in context with the novel Dollar Bahuby Sudha Murty who portrays the significance of traditional Indian values within the confines of socio-cultural and humanistic perspectives. The methodology of critical analysis is employed in the present research work. Sudha Murty's writing is a proficient documentation of the Indian culture and traditions invoking pride in the Indian value heritage. She pens down the fascinating experiences of her life describing the lives of interesting people revealing the lessons she learnt in her life journey as a daughter, mother, wife, friend and philanthropist. Her writing underlines the Indian traditional value heritage as an imperishable reservoir and serves as a guiding pole to the modernised age facing many socio-cultural problems.

Keywords: Indian Culture, Indian Value System, Indian Value Heritage, Life Lessons, Traditional Values, etc.

Introduction:

Dollar Bahu is a novel by Sudha Murty which was originally written in Kannada. It is a story about how money corrupts the human relationships and how family is tore apart in fulfilling the greed of some of its members. Originally Murty has written *Dollar Bahu* in Kannada with the title *Dollar Sose* in 2001. It was first published by Amey Inspiring books, Pune in 2006. *Dollar Bahu*, is about the greed of dollar and how it affects peace, happiness, health in a middle class Indian family. It is set between Dharwad, Bangalore and the USA. Gouramma and Shamanna live in a small house with their children; the eldest son, Chandru, has big dreams of settling in the USA while the younger one, Girish, is happy and content with his job as a bank clerk and their daughter, Surabhi, is a selfish and happy-go-lucky person. Shamanna has been a school teacher all his life who is simple, honest, generous and down to earth.

Gauramma settles her hopes on Chandru who settles in the USA and helps his family to be financially stable. He marries Jamuna, a only child of a rich man. Girish marries Vinuta, poor and orphan from the small town of Dharwad. Jamuna becomes Gauramma's favourite for her husband's earning in dollars as well as for her wealthy and affluent background. Gauramma's greed surpasses the submissive Vinuta's devotion, services, and goodness of heart, sacrifices, her simplicity and humility. Gowamma is in full praise of the dollar bahu, Jamunawho never cares



for their goodness. Her only contribution is a monthly cheque by her husband. Jamuna is mean, selfish, shrewd, self-centred, practical and smart. Gauramma's perceptions about Jamuna, her beloved 'dollar bahu' are met with sheer disappointment when she visits them in the USA. Gradually, Gauramma realizes that America is not her home. She wants to be in India which is her true home and with her family.

Murty makes the readers think whether money defines the human relationships, life; the way of thinking and a person in total with a simple plot and language. It revolves around a middle class family and depicts how the temptation of the Dollar affects relationships within that family. Gouramma learns the importance of a good heart that comes before money. The story tries to revive the significance of human values and human relationships in individual's life.

Murty hopes that this story will be a path shower to some families that love and affection are more important than money. She proves the point that one cannot have the best of both worlds and has left it to the reader to ponder and choose what is good or bad. It explores India and its simple but cultured people and underlines the significance of Indian traditional values. The book also discusses on globalization and modern day problems.

Obedience has helped Murty to be successful in life. She believes that not only the elders from the family are respected but the elders in the neighbourhood are also respected and revered. Gouramma, a character in Murty's novel *Dollar Bahu* remembers that children from neighbourhood used to touch her feet to show their reverence towards her,

When those children grew up and passed their examinations, they would come and take their blessings. Their proud mothers would say, 'you have bathed him in his infancy. He is an officer now.' Gouramma beamed with pride and joy on such occasions (Murty, 88).

Vinuta, a leading character in *Dollar Bahu*, is an orphan. Bheemanna is her 'distant uncle' moved into the house of Vinuta with his family to take care of her. Bheemanna took care of her and her education though his own income is not sufficient. There is also an old lady, a distant relative of Bheemanna is living with them and is dependent on him. Such arrangement of supporting the orphans and dependents in a family is a normal practice in Indian social system.

Vinuta in *Dollar Bahu* takes a day's leave when Gowamma, her mother-in-law finds a lump in her breast. She takes her to the doctor and when doctor wants to do the further checkups, she promptly applies for another days leave and takes her to the hospital and stays with her and takes good care of her as if she is her own mother. Surabhi, Gauramma's daughter, wants to live with Girish, her elder brother in America. Gouramma supports her idea as,

She remembered how she has stayed with her brother's family for two years when Shamanna has been transferred to some godforsaken village. She has always felt that it was the right of a sister to stay in her brother's house (Murty, 85).

Indian culture namely promotes collectivism. Vinuta, in *Dollar Bahu*, stands for orientation of collectivism, and sacrifice of individualism, fulfilling every family need without thinking about one's own happiness. Traditionally Indian family system is joint family system including at least three generations, grandparents, parents and children share the same value system, beliefs and faiths. However, joint family system is deteriorating due to the modern life style. These values are



losing importance due to the growth of materialistic values in the process of modernization. But still joint family system is surviving in India. Self-centeredness is denied in joint family system as family orientation is a key to the happiness. It emphasizes family integrity, family loyalty and family unity. C. Harry Hui and Harry C. Triandis defined collectivism which is exact opposite to the modern day individualism as, “a sense of harmony, interdependence and concern for others” (Hui and Triandis, 244).

To be precise collectivism is greater readiness to cooperate with the family and accommodating elder’s opinions and suggestions in most aspects of life to maintain the values of peaceful coexistence, caring and sharing, understanding, helping in the time of crisis, and difficulties. Thus, family is an important unit of the society to sustain the traditional values.

Chandru regrets about not finding the love and warmth of family for his daughter Manasi who might not inherit the values he cherishes and live a different life in America. Thus, Murty’s writing is structured around a traditional axis of Indian value system. In *Dollar Bahu*, Chandru and his mother Gauramma dream for the American life, he strives hard to settle there with the help and support of his mother; Gauramma too stays in America for one whole year and concludes that, “My place is in India and I feel comfortable there, in spite of all the difficulties” (Murty, *DB* 131).

Murty is well aware of the need of modern life, the significance of the development of science and technology to make human life more comfortable, however she propagates the traditional way of life with peace and harmony.

References

- Abedi, Mohmoud, and Soltanzadeh, Hosein. “The Interaction between Tradition and Modernity in Contemporary architecture of Persian Gulf States: Case Study of Arab Emirates” *International Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Studies*. Vol. 1, no 1, Nov. 2014. Pp. 24-34 www.ijrhss.org/pdf/v1-i1/5.pdf Accessed 4 Feb. 2015. Web.
- Anand, Mulk Raj. “Tradition and Modernity in Literature.” *Journal of South Asian Literature*, vol. 10, no. 1, 1974, pp. 45–50., www.jstor.org/stable/40871709. Accessed 17 Jul.. 2011. Web
- Aurobindo Sri, *The Foundations of Indian Culture*. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1971. Print.
- Bhajanananda, Swami. “Values, yoga and Reality”. *Values: The Key to a Meaningful Life*, Madras: Shri Ramkrishna Math, 1996. Print.
- Bhide, Nivedita R. “Values in Family”. *Values: The Key to a Meaningful Life*, Madras: Shri Ramkrishna Math, 1996. Print.
- Cohen, Stephen. *India Emerging Power*. Washington D.C: Brookings Institution Press, 2001. Print.
- Dalai Lama H. H. The, “Values for a Nonviolent Society”. *Values: The Key to a Meaningful Life*, Madras: Shri Ramkrishna Math, 1996. Print.
- Devapurkar, S. R. *Children’s Fiction in India: A Critical Study*, Jaipur: Shrinivas Publications. 2012. Print.
- Dubey A. P. *Modernity and The Problem of Cultural Identity*, Northern Book Center, 2008. Print.
- Gautamananda, Swami. “Values, Yoga and Reality”. *Values: The Key to a Meaningful Life*, Madras: Shri Ramkrishna Math, 1996. Print.



- Ghosh, Shantikumar, *Universal Values: As Reflected in Literature*, Kolkata: Ramkrishna Mission Institute of Culture, 2004. Print.
- Giddens, Anthony. *Sociology*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers. 2001. Print.
- Giddens, Anthony. *The Consequences of Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991 reprint. 2012. Print.
- Gusfield, Joseph. Tradition and Modernity: Misplaced Polarities in the Study of Social Change. *The American Journal of Sociology* vol.72: 1967. 351-362. Print.
- Hedi, Boeston, Nick. "The Three Points of View". *Values: The Key to a Meaningful Life*, Madras: Shri Ramkrishna Math, 1996. Print.
- Khutiala, S. K. *From Tradition to Modernity*. New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1973.
- Lai, Chen. *Tradition and Modernity: A humanistic View*. Translated by Ryden, Edmund, Boston: Brill, 2009. Print.
- Lutz, Jessie Gregory, Salah El-Shakhs, eds. *Tradition and Modernity: the Role of Traditionalism in the Modernization Process*. Washington DC: University Press of America, 1982. Print.
- Mackay, Marina. *The Cambridge Introduction to the Novel*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2011. Print.
- Martinussen, John. *Society, State and Market: A Guide to Competing Theories of Development*, Human Science Research Council (HSRC) Publishers, London and New York: Zed Books Ltd, 1997. Print.
- Prasad, Amarnath and Kanupriya. *Indian Writing in English: Tradition and Modernity*. New Delhi: Sarup and Sons, 2006. Print.
- Murty, Sudha. *Dollar Bahu*. New Delhi: Penguin India, 2006. Print.
- Riberiro, Julio. "Values in the Police Force". *Values: The Key to a Meaningful Life*, Madras: Shri Ramkrishna Math, 1996. Print.
- Singh, Yogendra. "Social Change", *Culture Change in India: Identity and Globalization*. Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 2000. Print.
- Verma, Pavan K. *The Great Indian Middle Class*, New Delhi: Viking-Penguin, 1998. Print.
- Tripathi, A. N. *Human Values*. New Delhi: New Age International Publishers, 2014. Print.
- Tyagananda, Swami. "Introduction". *Values: The Key to a Meaningful Life*, Madras: Shri Ramkrishna Math, 1996. Print.



This is an Open Access e-Journal Published Under A Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License

To Cite the Article: Swami, Manasi. "Dollar Bahu: A Proficient Documentation of the Indian Value Heritage." *Literary Cognizance*, V - 3 (December, 2024): 157-160. Web.