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A Study on Tradition and Modernity in Sudha Murty's Dollar Bahu

Tasmiya N Mulla**Abstract**

Sudha Murty's Dollar Bahu explores the conflict between traditional Indian family values and modernity shaped by globalization and materialism. Through the contrasting lives of Vinuta and Jamuna, the novel examines changing family relationships, gender roles, cultural identity, and moral values. It demonstrates that wealth and foreign status can influence social attitudes while emphasizing that compassion, respect, and integrity remain the foundations of meaningful relationships. The novel advocates a balanced approach that embraces progress without abandoning ethical values, making it highly relevant to contemporary Indian society.

Keywords

Sudha Murty, Dollar Bahu, Tradition, Modernity, Indian English Literature, Family Values, Materialism, Globalization, Feminism, Gender Roles, Cultural Identity, Ethics, Contemporary Fiction.

Introduction

Sudha Murty is a leading Indian English writer known for portraying ordinary lives and social issues. Dollar Bahu reflects the transformation of Indian family life under globalization and economic change. The novel contrasts affection and sacrifice with wealth and status, raising important questions about materialism, family relationships, gender expectations, and cultural identity.

Objectives and Aims of the Study

To examine the representation of tradition and modernity in Dollar Bahu; analyze family relationships, gender roles, and materialism; evaluate Vinuta and Jamuna as symbolic characters; and assess the novel's feminist and social perspectives.

Explanation

Dollar Bahu realistically portrays the changing priorities of Indian middle-class families. Gouramma admires her wealthy daughter-in-law Jamuna because she lives in America, while Vinuta, who selflessly cares for the family, is neglected.

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Murty critiques the tendency to equate wealth with personal worth. Vinuta represents compassion, patience, and moral integrity, whereas Jamuna symbolizes globalization and financial success. The novel argues that modern development should complement rather than replace traditional ethical values.

Murty also explores women's roles, globalization, and changing cultural identities. Gouramma's visit to America reveals that material prosperity cannot replace emotional warmth and family togetherness. From a feminist perspective, the novel recognizes women's emotional labour and challenges judgments based on economic contribution. Ultimately, the novel advocates a balance between tradition and modernity.

Methodology

This qualitative descriptive study is based on textual analysis of *Dollar Bahu* and secondary scholarly sources. Themes such as tradition, modernity, family, globalization, gender, and ethics are examined through close reading and comparative literary analysis. The research synthesizes critical interpretations to understand Murty's literary vision.

Data Analysis

Analysis indicates that the novel portrays the tension between traditional values and modern aspirations. It concludes that affection, trust, and integrity provide stronger foundations for family life than material success and that globalization should be balanced with cultural and ethical values.

Conclusion

Dollar Bahu demonstrates that modernization offers opportunities but should not replace compassion, respect, and family values. Through Vinuta, Jamuna, and Gouramma, Sudha Murty highlights the

importance of balancing tradition with progress. The novel remains relevant for understanding contemporary Indian society and continues to inspire discussions on family, feminism, ethics, and globalization.

References

This paper is based on the 50 APA references listed in the previously prepared article, including works by Sudha Murty, M.H. Abrams, Terry Eagleton, Elaine Showalter, Simone de Beauvoir, Judith Butler, bell hooks, Peter Barry, Homi Bhabha, M.K. Naik, K.R.S. Iyengar, and other leading scholars.