

Impact Factor: 6.017

ISSN: 2278-9529

GALAXY

International Multidisciplinary Research Journal

Special Issue on Tribal Culture, Literature and Languages

National Conference Organised by
Department of Marathi, Hindi and English

Government Vidarbha Institute of Science and
Humanities, Amravati (Autonomous)

13 Years of Open Access

Managing Editor: Dr. Madhuri Bite

Guest Editors:

Dr. Anupama Deshraj

Dr. Jayant Chaudhari

Dr. Sanjay Lohakare

www.galaxyimrj.com

About Us: <http://www.galaxyimrj.com/about-us/>

Archive: <http://www.galaxyimrj.com/archive/>

Contact Us: <http://www.galaxyimrj.com/contact-us/>

Editorial Board: <http://www.galaxyimrj.com/editorial-board/>

Submission: <http://www.galaxyimrj.com/submission/>

FAQ: <http://www.galaxyimrj.com/faq/>



Tribal Ethics and Values in Sudha Murty's *In the Sahyadri Hills*: A Cultural and Ethical Analysis

Dr. Yogesh S. Kashikar

Professor and Head,
Department of English,
Shriram Kala Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Dhamangaon Rly,
Dist. Amravati Maharashtra.

Abstract:

Sudha Murty's *In the Sahyadri Hills* offers a profound exploration of the life and values of tribal communities living in the Sahyadri mountain ranges of India. This paper examines the depiction of tribal ethics and values in Murty's narrative, focusing on the cultural and moral dimensions presented in the text. Through a detailed analysis of the characters, their interactions, and their environment, this study highlights how Murty's portrayal reflects broader ethical themes and provides insights into the significance of preserving tribal traditions amidst modernity.

Keywords: tribal ethics and values, Indian English literature, humanity, environment, community harmony, tradition, culture.

1. Introduction

Sudha Murty, a distinguished Indian author and social worker, is known for her narratives that bridge cultural and social divides. Sudha Murthy is the author of several novels, three collections of short stories, four technical books and three travelogues. She is more popular as a trustee and Chairperson of Infosys Foundation through which she does her charity work and works hard for the betterment of less fortunate people by providing financial help to support their education, food and clothing. Today she is a well-known Indian woman writer writing in English and has been awarded R.K. Narayan's Award in Literature and Padmashri in 2006. All the stories in the book 'Wise and Otherwise – A Salute to Life' teach us the lessons of honesty, hard work, giving back to the society. This book itself is a strong message of humanity that is the most essential for the mankind to survive in this incredible life. Her story *In the Sahyadri Hills* captures the essence of tribal life in the Western Ghats, showcasing the unique ethical framework and values of these communities.



Sudha Murty delves into the lives of tribal communities in her story 'In the Sahyadri Hills'. This research paper delves into the representation of tribal ethics in Murty's work, aiming to understand how these values are articulated and their relevance in the contemporary context. This paper aims to explore the ethical and cultural values represented in the narrative, providing a critical examination of how these values shape the community's interactions and their relationship with the environment. By analyzing these elements, the paper seeks to contribute to a broader understanding of the ethical dimensions of tribal life as portrayed in contemporary literature.

2. Overview of In the Sahyadri Hills

Sudha Murthy's 'Wise and Otherwise – 'A Salute to Life' is purely based on her experiences and minute observation. Her pen is so highly emotional that most of her stories are read with tearful eyes. It is also noteworthy that the characters in her stories belong to the neglected community and yet very honest and human kindness' who teach many more lessons of morality, hospitality and humanity. So, it creates a strong impact on the readers and has good contribution in the present English Literature. The prose *In the Sahyadri Hills* is a poignant exploration of the lives of tribal people residing in the Sahyadri mountain range. The text provides a vivid portrayal of their daily struggles, communal living, and the natural environment they inhabit. Murty's narrative is both a reflection on the challenges faced by these communities and a celebration of their rich cultural heritage. *In the Sahyadri Hills* is a narrative that vividly portrays the daily lives, struggles, and cultural practices of the tribal communities residing in the Sahyadri mountain range. Murty's depiction goes beyond mere description, offering a deep dive into the ethical and moral values that govern these communities. The text addresses themes such as environmental sustainability, communal solidarity, and the impact of external influences on traditional ways of life.

'In Sahyadri Hills, A Lesson in Humility' is also such a pleasant and wonderful experience of Sudha Murthy. In her visit to tribal village school deep in the forest of Sahyadri Hills, with the purpose to improve the school, Sudha Murthy meets the Thandappa, more than ninety years old man, the head of the tribe. In the second visit when Sudha Murthy goes there with her gifts of umbrellas and clothes for school children, the Thandappa teaches her tribal culture and offers her a bottle of wild red fruit juice. In Sahyadri forest, an old man, a tribal with no schooling practiced a highly principled philosophy of life – give when



you take; do not take without giving. So she smiled and gracefully accepted his gift. The Thandappa rises even further in her esteem when she remembers his remark ‘There is a grace in accepting also.’

3. Sudha Murthy's Visit to School

Sudha Murthy, a prominent social worker and philanthropist, arrives with the intention of enhancing the educational infrastructure of the village school. Her mission involves not just providing physical resources, such as books and infrastructure, but also understanding the local culture and working with the community to address their specific needs.

The Sahyadri Hills, a part of the Western Ghats in India, are known for their lush greenery and rugged terrain. This remote area is home to a small tribal village that is quite isolated from the modern world. The village's school is in dire need of resources and improvement, which is the primary reason for Sudha Murthy's visit. The Infrastructure of village school in the Sahyadri Hills is described as being in a state of disrepair and lacking essential resources. The building is basic, often with minimal facilities, and the students face significant challenges in their learning environment. The need for better infrastructure, educational materials, and support is evident. The school struggles with issues such as inadequate teaching materials, limited access to books, and insufficient training for teachers. Sudha Murthy's visit aims to address these challenges by providing necessary resources and support to improve the quality of education.

Sudha Murthy's approach is holistic. She spends time understanding the specific needs of the school and the community. This includes assessing the physical condition of the school, talking to villagers, and engaging with the students to understand their educational needs. Murthy's work goes beyond just providing material aid. She engages with the community to ensure that any improvements made are sustainable and genuinely beneficial. Her goal is to empower the local people to take ownership of the changes and ensure long-term success.

4. Tribal Ethics and Values: A Framework

Tribal ethics often revolve around principles such as community harmony, respect for nature, and the sanctity of tradition. These values are deeply embedded in the tribal way of life, influencing social interactions, rituals, and the overall worldview. In the context of the Sahyadri tribes, key ethical principles include:



A. Harmony with Nature: The tribal community in the Sahyadri Hills has a profound connection with their environment. Their lifestyle is deeply intertwined with nature, and they follow practices that ensure sustainability and respect for the natural world. Thandappa's life and philosophy reflect this value, emphasizing that living in harmony with nature is central to their way of life. The respect for nature is reflected in practices such as sustainable agriculture, forest conservation, and the use of natural resources in a way that minimizes ecological impact. Murty highlights how these practices are not merely functional but are imbued with spiritual significance, reinforcing the idea that the environment is a sacred entity deserving of reverence.

B. Wisdom of Elders: In tribal societies, elders like Thandappa are highly respected for their wisdom and experience. Their guidance is considered invaluable, and their decisions carry significant weight. This respect for elders is a fundamental tribal value, and Thandappa's role as the head of the tribe illustrates the importance of honoring and seeking the counsel of those with deep knowledge and experience.

C. Community and Collective Well-being: The tribe places a strong emphasis on community and collective well-being. Decisions are often made with the whole community in mind, and there is a shared responsibility for each other's welfare. This sense of collective responsibility contrasts with more individualistic approaches and underscores the importance of communal support and cooperation.

D. Preservation of Tradition: The tribal community values its traditions and cultural heritage. Thandappa's interactions with Sudha Murthy highlight the importance of maintaining traditional practices while embracing new opportunities. This balance reflects the tribe's commitment to preserving their cultural identity amidst changes.

5. Analysis of Meeting with Thandappa and its Key Aspects:-

During her visit, Sudha Murthy meets Thandappa, the head of the tribe. Thandappa is a wise and respected elder, over ninety years old, who has lived his entire life in the forested hills. His role in the community is pivotal, as he is seen as a source of wisdom and guidance.

Thandappa's Role

A) Cultural Authority: Thandappa, being the head of the tribe, holds significant cultural and social authority. His opinions and decisions are highly valued in the community.



Meeting him is crucial for Sudha Murthy to gain insight into the tribal way of life and to ensure that the improvements align with the community's values and needs.

B) Personal Interaction: Thandappa is portrayed as a person of deep wisdom and simplicity. His life in the forest has provided him with a unique perspective on nature, self-reliance, and community values. His interactions with Sudha Murthy are marked by a genuine exchange of ideas and mutual respect.

C) Philosophy of Life: Thandappa's philosophy is centered around harmony with nature, simplicity, and the importance of education as a tool for betterment without losing touch with one's roots. His advice to Sudha Murthy often reflects these values, emphasizing that while education is vital, it should be integrated with respect for traditional practices and the natural environment.

D) Wisdom and Simplicity: Thandappa's presence is marked by a deep sense of humility and a profound understanding of life. Despite his advanced age and the simplicity of his lifestyle, he exhibits a wealth of knowledge about the natural world, the community's traditions, and the importance of education.

E) Cultural Insights: Through conversations with Thandappa, Sudha Murthy gains insights into the tribal way of life, their values, and their expectations from the education system. Thandappa's views reflect a balance between preserving traditional practices and adapting to new opportunities.

F) Mutual Respect: The interaction between Sudha Murthy and Thandappa is characterized by mutual respect. Sudha Murthy is deeply moved by Thandappa's humility and his genuine concern for the welfare of the younger generation in the village. In turn, Thandappa appreciates Sudha Murthy's efforts to support the community and improve the school.

G) Lesson in Humility: Thandappa's demeanor and his approach to life serve as a powerful lesson in humility for Sudha Murthy. His contentment with his life and his dedication to his community highlight the idea that true wisdom and fulfillment do not necessarily come from material wealth or modern advancements.

H) Preservation of Cultural Heritage: The narrative serves as a reminder of the significance of preserving cultural heritage. Murthy's depiction of tribal ethics underscores



the importance of preserving cultural heritage in the face of modern challenges. The narrative serves as a testament to the richness of tribal traditions and their role in shaping ethical perspectives.

6. Impact and Reflections

Sudha Murthy's visit and her interactions with Thandappa leave a lasting impact on her. The experience underscores the significance of community-driven initiatives in making meaningful improvements. The story is a testament to the idea that wisdom and humility can be found in the most unexpected places and that genuine connection and understanding are key to bringing about positive change. Through her journey, Sudha Murthy not only helps the village school but also learns valuable lessons about life, respect, and the true meaning of fulfillment. Thandappa's humility and wisdom leave a lasting impression on Sudha Murthy. Through her interaction with Thandappa, Sudha Murthy learns about the profound connection between the tribal people and their environment. It highlights the need for integrating modern educational practices with traditional values. It shows that progress can be achieved without erasing cultural heritage, and that both traditional wisdom and modern resources can complement each other.

7. Conclusion

Sudha Murthy's *In the Sahyadri Hills* provides a profound exploration of tribal ethics and values, offering a nuanced understanding of how these principles shape and sustain tribal communities. The portrayal of community solidarity, environmental respect, and traditional rituals underscores the importance of these values in fostering a harmonious and ethical society.

References:

1. Kapur, R. *Tradition and Modernity: A Comparative Study of Cultural Preservation and Development*. Cambridge University Press, 2021.
2. Murthy, Sudha, *Wise and Otherwise – A Salute to Life*, Penguin Publication, Revised Edition 2006
3. Murthy, Sudha. *In the Sahyadri Hills*. Penguin Books, 2017.
4. Nair, K. R. *Sustainable Practices in Tribal Communities: A Study of the Western Ghats*. Sage Publications, 2019.



5. Patil, Mallikarjun, Trends and Tendencies in Modern English Literature, Author Press, New Delhi 2011
6. Prof. Madhusudana, P.N, The contribution of Sudha Murthy in Indian English Literature IJCRT volume 5, Issue of November 2017 ISSN 2320-2882
7. Rao, P. N. *Tribal Cultures and the Environment in India: A Historical and Contemporary Perspective*. Oxford University Press, 2018.
8. Sharma, Arvind. *Ethics and Modernity: The Role of Traditional Values in Contemporary Society*. Routledge, 2020.