Synopsis

Of The Proposed Research study Entitled

THE THEME OF VIOLENCE IN MEENA ALEXANDERS AND SUDHA MURTHY’S SELECT WORKS

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Introduction:

Indian independence provided various opportunities to the subaltern groups of Indian society to present themselves through writing, painting, music and singing. Persons from minority groups like poor women, uneducated farmers, children etc. Started expressing themselves through literature in various languages. That is why the scene of Indian English literature which was dominated by male writers in the initial phase of about fifty years saw the emergence of women writers in the second half of the last century. Gouri Deshpande, Kamala Markandaya, Geeta Mehta, Shashi Deshpande are some of the mentionable names from this phase. Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai, Sudha Murthy and Meena Alexander also placed their claims with strong assertion by getting national and international prizes for their impressive and great works.

Indian women novelists influenced by the women’s liberation movement have brought to light the injustice meted out to them by the patriarchal society. These novelists have a feminist undercurrent with a woman as the central character who reacts to the existing social set up. Sudha Murthy being a social worker and a feminist always worked towards the betterment of the society and the rural development. She worked hard to improve the position of women in the society. Meena Alexander tries to expose the condition of women in post independence era. Both the authors very realistically try how women have always been supposed to have been victimized by men dominated ideas in the social, cultural, academic and economic field. They believed that dictum framed by men always did injustice to women. Indian writers in English showed the various forms of exploitation of weaker sex over the years.

The present research study aims at analyzing the oeuvre of Sudha Murthy and Meena Alexander from the perspective of Indian and Asian-American respectively, and how they like to grope for their identity lost in the muddle of race, culture, nationality, language, colour, sex and gender. It also aims at how they desperately want to construct their identity regardless of their socio-cultural ambience.
Meena Alexander is a prolific writer and an internationally acclaimed poet and scholar. She was born in Allahabad into a Syrian Christian family from Kerala, South India. At the age of five her father’s job took the family to Khartoum in newly independent Sudan. After graduating from Khartoum University in 1969, Meena Alexander moved to England for doctoral study and earned a Ph.D. in English in 1973. She then returned to India to teach at several universities in Delhi and Hyderabad. She lived and worked in New York City where she was a distinguished Professor of English at Hunter College and the Graduate Center, City University of New York. Meena Alexander published many books, including several volumes of poetry, criticism, a memoir, lyrical essays and two novels. The present study reflects the internal turmoil of a displaced and dislocated women in India and world.

The short, semi-autobiographical first novel *Nampally Road* by Meena Alexander offers the reader an honest, if somewhat confused, insight to the mixed feelings of the author’s experiences upon her return to her native land – with her optimism being dashed by a sense of dismay and disgust. While the emotions are triggered by external and internal circumstances of the protagonist in the 1970s Hyderabad, published in 1991, *Nampally Road*, albeit subtly, contends with the underlying theme of dislocation at various levels she had to deal with over the course of her life told through the eyes of the protagonist, Mira Kannadical, an English instructor at a local college in Hyderabad. The novel recreates some actual, historical events of 1970s in the city where the titular road emerges as almost a key character in the novel with several incidents occurring on *Nampally Road*. The author makes a reference to the origin of *Nampally Road* in her autobiography *Fault Lines*: A memoir as the title of the memoir indicates her sense of displacement or dislocation is such a strong sentiment, owing perhaps to the physical trajectory of her life, that she appears to struggle with lines, boundaries and environments in her work and self.
The novel *mahattan music* is set against the backdrop of political events during the 1980s and early 1990s. The events which certainly disturb the peaceful life of women and every individual through out the world are mentioned in the novel.

Sudha Murthy came into limelight with the publication of her first novel, 'Dollar Bahu’ in 2005. Her novels have women titles like *Mahasheweta, Dollar Bahu, Gently Falls the Bakula*, which suggest Murthy’s preoccupation with the problems of women in Indian society. They are not house wives like the women characters in other novels. The second important aspect of her writing is that even women in high income groups suffer at the hands of traditions and cultures. Murthy seems extremely balanced when she puts the blame only on men of the family but also on the women. Murthy many times showed the clash of interest between the first generation of women and the second generation of women in her novels. It invariably ended in the loss of face for the younger generation. Sudha Murthy’s writing is a wonderful combination of old Indian and the new Indian twentieth century culture. Anand in *Mahashweta*, Guramma in *Dollar Bahu*, and Shrikant in *Gently Fall the Bakula* came from struggling middle class families. The authors Meena and Sudha shed light on the realistic picture of post colonial India and the world. Their works reverberate with the problems of women and exploding violence which has reached to alarming levels in their country as well as in whole world. The reason for their success as prolific writers can be found in their themes and narrative technique.

Meena Alexander and Sudha Murthy are well known for their evocative and gripping style of writing which deals, uniquely and sensitively, with the struggles of women in the patriarchal and male dominated society. They successfully convince their critics showing that they are capable of mixing universal themes with the individual which enable them to become prolific and global writers.
• **Necessity of Conducting Research:-**

Although it is true that writers all over the world, both men and women, have dealt with the nature of relations between man and woman, there are niches of darkness which need to be probed. Meena Alexander and Sudha Murthy very seriously attempted to focus on the innumerable restrictions against women in this male dominated society. The present study seeks to examine the brilliance of writing which results to be looked at more seriously. The proposed research work exposes at full length and tries to understand these prolific writers’ attitude to wards life and their world view. The researcher tries to attempt to find what made Meena Alexander and Sudha Murthy to hark back on such things like violence against women for their creative purposes. The study will definitely go a long way in contributing to the canon of Indian women’s writing.

• **Aims and Objectives of the study—**

⇒ To analyse men and women’s characters in the selected novels of Sudha Murthy and Meena Alexander
⇒ To expose the theme of violence.
⇒ To find out gender behavioral patterns.
⇒ To know the historical changes in gender relations.
⇒ To throw light on the history and the development of diasporic writing.
⇒ To explore the themes of violence against women on the representative work of Sudha Murthy and Meena Alexander.
⇒ To assess the status of women in Indian society over the years.
⇒ To compare and contrast the writing of Sudha Murthy and Meena Alexander with their fellow South Asian American writers
⇒ To place the two writers in historical perspective.
To find out the different approaches towards violence between male and female writers with special reference to Sudha Murthy and Meena Alexander.

To focus on how the two authors understand the world around them in flesh and blood.

To theories what is called Indian and Indian American female writing

To estimate the place and contribution by these two writers to the Indian writing in English.

An attempt will be made to study Sudha Murthy and Meena Alexander contribution to literary criticism.

To redefine the canon of Indian writing in English / Indian expatriate writing / Asian American / Indian American writing.

Assumption—

The selected novels contain events and situations in the family and professional lives of men and women which throw light on various kinds of relations between the two sexes. The two novelists belong to the same period of twenty first century in Indian social history, after India accepted liberalization. Sudha Murthy and Meena Alexander’s women are free and self asserting. Naturally we can find two different kinds of women in the two novelists. They made the characters to claim their rightful position in the family and society. They become self reliant and in some cases began to steer the national and international affairs. Both the writers successfully claim for themselves a new literary, geographic and psychological space.
• **Scope and Limitation:**

This is limited to the following works by Meena Alexander and Sudha Murthy:

**Meena Alexander –** (1951-2018)

1) Nampally Road--------------------- 1991
2) Fault Lines: A memoir----------- 1993
3) Manhattan Music --------------- 1997

**Sudha Murthy –** (19 - August -1950)

1) Dollar Bahu---------------------- 2005
2) Mahashweta--------------------- 2007
3) Gently Falls the Bakula---------- 2008

• **Research Methodology :**

The present study will be an intrinsic one in which the tests will be interpreted under the light of patriarchal system and women’s problems from the women’s point of view. As the present research purely analytical, from evaluative and comparative in nature the primary and secondary sources will be put to scrutiny and thoroughly examined. The survey will be attempted in the field to work from general to specific to showcase the true understanding of the attitude and ideology of the writers through their literary work.
A Tentative Research Design:-

The present research project for the purpose of convenience has been divided into Five chapters as detailed herein:

1. Introduction.
2. Review of Literature.
3. Domestic violence in Sudha Murthy and Meena Alexander’s work.
4. Social violence in Sudha Murthy and Meena Alexander’s work.
5. Conclusion.

Chapter One—

Introduction

This will be an introductory in nature. It will state the topic clearly, give a background of the study, brief biographies of the two novelists the details of methodology, significance of the study, a justification of the selection of the topic, a brief review of the related literature.

Chapter two—

Review of literature

The second chapter will contain a brief survey of the Indian writing in English and Indian expatriate writing with a special thrust on the domestic and social violence in the writings of the women writers. The survey will comment on those novels which dealt with the domestic and social violence from different angles.
Chapter Three—

Domestic violence in the work of Sudha Murthy and Meena Alexander.

This chapter will analyze the select works of Sudha Murthy and Meena Alexander from the point of view of the topic. Sudha Murthy and Meena Alexander have dealt with the social, cultural problem of women in India in these novels from physical as well as psychological point of view. The researcher will select the incident in which man woman relations are portrayed.

Chapter Four—

Social violence in the work of Sudha Murthy and Meena Alexander.

In this chapter researcher will find out the point of social violence in the select works of Sudha Murthy and Meena Alexander.

Chapter Five—

Conclusion:

This will be the concluding chapter of the thesis. It will summarize the study with concluding remarks, major finding and potential for further research. The chapter will end with some suggestions on the further research and its academic significance.

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