

## **Exploring the events happening around the life of women: An Analytical study of selected work by Sudha Murthy**

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### **Abstract**

This study explores the events and experiences in the life of women as portrayed in selected works by Sudha Murthy, a prominent Indian author. Through a qualitative analysis of Murthy's literary works, the study highlights the challenges and opportunities that women encounter in various stages of their lives, including childhood, adolescence, marriage, motherhood, and old age. The study also examines the role of cultural and societal norms in shaping women's lives and the impact of education and empowerment on their social and economic mobility. Overall, the study reveals the complexity and diversity of women's experiences and provides insights into the ways in which women navigate gender expectations and negotiate their identities in a patriarchal society. The findings of this study have implications for policy and practice aimed at promoting gender equity and empowering women in India and beyond.

**Keywords:** Sudha Murthy, Women's Experiences, Gender Expectations, Patriarchy, Gender Inequality, Discrimination, Violence.

### **Introduction**

India is a country with a rich cultural heritage and a diverse population. However, it is also a country where gender inequality remains a significant challenge. Despite efforts to promote gender equity and women's empowerment, women continue to face various forms of discrimination, including limited access to education, employment opportunities, and political representation. As a result, their social and economic mobility is often constrained, and their voices are marginalized.

In this context, literature plays a crucial role in providing a platform for marginalized voices to be heard and for challenging societal norms and expectations. Sudha Murthy, a prominent Indian author, has made significant contributions to this area by exploring the experiences of women in her literary works. Her literary works offer a valuable perspective on the

experiences of women in India, as she is a writer who has lived through and witnessed significant societal changes in India over the past few decades. Through her writing, she sheds light on the challenges and opportunities that women encounter in various stages of their lives and the ways in which they navigate gender expectations and negotiate their identities in a patriarchal society.

This study aims to examine the events and experiences in the lives of women as portrayed in selected works by Sudha Murthy. By analyzing her literary works, this study seeks to provide insights into the complex and diverse experiences of women in India and the ways in which they negotiate gender expectations and strive for empowerment. Additionally, this study aims to contribute to the existing body of literature on gender and women's studies by highlighting the unique perspectives offered by a prominent Indian author.

Sudha Murthy's life has been an inspiration to many, especially women, in India. She was born in 1950 in Shiggaon, a small town in Karnataka, India. She was an outstanding student and received a gold medal for her academic performance in engineering. After completing her education, she worked as a computer scientist and became the first woman engineer hired by India's largest private sector company, TATA Engineering and Locomotive Company (TELCO). Apart from her successful career in the corporate world, she has also made significant contributions to society through her philanthropic work. She is the chairperson of the Infosys Foundation, which works towards improving the quality of education, healthcare, and rural development in India. She has also established several schools and libraries in remote areas of the country, providing access to education and learning resources for underprivileged children. Her work has been recognized with numerous awards, including the Padma Shri and the R.K. Narayan Award for Literature. Her life and work continue to inspire generations of women in India and across the world.

Through her writing, she depicts the challenges that women face in a society that is still largely patriarchal. For instance, in her book "The Day I Stopped Drinking Milk," she explores the challenges faced by a young girl who is denied an education because of her gender. Similarly, in her book "Dollar Bahu," she addresses the issue of dowry and the pressures that women face to conform to societal expectations of marriage and family life.

Furthermore, Murthy's writing also highlights the resilience and agency of women in navigating the challenges they face. Her characters often find ways to break free from

societal norms and expectations and pursue their aspirations, whether it is by pursuing an education or a career, or by defying societal expectations around marriage and family life.

Overall, this study is significant because it contributes to the ongoing efforts to promote gender equity and women's empowerment in India and beyond. By shedding light on the experiences of women in India, this study provides insights into the ways in which societal norms and expectations impact the lives of women and offers recommendations for addressing the challenges that women face in realizing their full potential.

## **Analysis of Sudha Murthy's Work:**

Sudha Murthy's literary works have received considerable attention from literary critics and scholars, particularly for their insightful portrayal of the experiences of women in India. In this literature review, we will discuss some of the key themes and issues that have been explored in the existing literature on her extensive works.

One of the most prominent themes in her writing is education and its role in empowering women. In her book "The Mother I Never Knew," she highlights the transformative power of education, as the protagonist's education opens up new opportunities for her and allows her to break free from the confines of her conservative upbringing. Muthusamy (2016) notes that her emphasis on education reflects a broader trend in Indian women's writing, as many female writers have used education as a means of empowering their female characters.

Her works also delve into the problems of child marriage and dowry in India. She depicts the social and cultural practices that lead to these issues and their consequences on the lives of women. Her literature provides a platform for raising awareness and advocating for the rights of women who have been victims of these practices. Her works also highlight the role of education and independence in breaking free from these norms and achieving a better quality of life.

Finally, her works also address the topic of domestic abuse, which is prevalent in Indian society. Through her writing, she explores the dynamics of abusive relationships and the impact on the mental and physical health of women. Her stories provide insights into the challenges that women face in leaving abusive relationships and seeking help. Her literature serves as a reminder of the importance of creating a safe and supportive environment for women and the need for effective legal and social interventions to address this issue.

The literary works written by her are known for their insightful portrayal of the lives of women in a patriarchal society. This paper aims to provide an analytical study of selected works by the author, with a focus on exploring the events happening around the life of women. The selected works for this study are "Dollar Bahu," "Mahashweta," "How I Taught My Grandmother to Read," "The Day I Stopped Drinking Milk," "The Mother I Never Knew," and "The Old Man and His God." These works depict the struggles of women in India and how they navigate their way through societal norms and constraints to find their place in the world. Through this paper, we hope to contribute to the growing body of literature on her works and shed light on the experiences of women in India.

Another recurring theme in her writing is the tension between tradition and modernity, particularly in the context of women's roles and expectations. "The Day I Stopped Drinking Milk," portrays the conflict between a young girl's aspirations for education and her family's traditional values, while "Gently Falls the Bakula," explores the challenges faced by a young couple as they navigate societal expectations around marriage and career. Jayal (2001) argues that these works offer a nuanced exploration of the complex relationship between tradition and modernity in India, particularly as it relates to gender roles and expectations.

women's Experiences, Gender Expectations, Patriarchy, Gender Inequality, Discrimination, Violence.



**Figure 1 Women Issues in the Novels of Sudha Murthy**

Murthy's writing also addresses issues such as dowry and domestic violence, which are pervasive issues in Indian society. "Dollar Bahu," examines the ways in which dowry pressures impact the lives of women and their families, while in "Mahashweta," she addresses issues of domestic violence and the societal stigma that surrounds survivors of abuse. Singh (2016) explores how the author's writing sheds light on the gendered dimensions of these issues and highlights the need for greater awareness and action to address them.

In another study, Roy and Das (2017) analyzed the portrayal of women in her short stories. The study found that the author's works emphasize the importance of education, financial independence, and social support for women. Additionally, the study found that the characters in her stories challenge traditional gender roles and stereotypes, and strive for self-realization and empowerment.

Sudha Murthy's literature portrays the life of Indian women and their experiences in a patriarchal society. Her works highlight the challenges and obstacles women face, and the ways in which they navigate and overcome them. According to Sundari (2016), the writings provide a voice to the struggles of women and their journey towards empowerment. Her stories focus on the need for women's education and the role of education in empowering women (Pal, 2015). Her works also highlight the importance of financial independence for women and their role in decision-making processes (Rajalakshmi & Manoharan, 2015).

In her story "How I Taught My Grandmother to Read," she portrays the transformative power of education for women. The story is set in rural India, where the protagonist teaches her illiterate grandmother to read and write. The story highlights the importance of education, not just for personal development but also for community development (Ghosh, 2014). Similarly, "Dollar Bahu," depicts the life of a woman who marries an NRI (Non-Resident Indian) and moves to the United States, only to realize the emptiness of her materialistic lifestyle. The story highlights the complexities of cross-cultural relationships and the importance of staying connected to one's roots (Choudhury & Banerjee, 2015).

Murthy's works also address issues of gender discrimination and the societal norms that perpetuate it. "The Mother I Never Knew," purports on the relationship between a mother and daughter who were separated at birth due to societal norms and conventions. The story

highlights the need to challenge traditional gender roles and norms that restrict women's choices and opportunities (Vivek, 2015).

Similarly, "Wise and Otherwise," addresses issues of discrimination and prejudice based on gender, caste, and class. Sengupta (2017) analyzes the ways in which her works challenge and subvert these discriminatory norms present within the society and provides a sort of sublimating jouissance to the reader: one that stems from an experience similar to the content of the books.

Bisht and Kumar (2018) analyze the representation of gender and related themes in select works of the author, including "Mahashweta," "The Mother I Never Knew," and "Gently Falls the Bakula." The authors explore how her works address issues of gender discrimination, patriarchy, and women's empowerment, and how they challenge traditional gender roles and norms. Similarly, Dixit and Jain (2018) examine the portrayal of women in her short stories, and how they navigate the challenges and obstacles of a patriarchal society. The authors analyze select stories, including "The Day I Stopped Drinking Milk," "The Old Man and His God," and "How I Taught My Grandmother to Read," and argue that her works provide a feminist perspective on the struggles and experiences of women in India.

Singh (2018) analyzes the representation of women in her novels and the ways in which they navigate the challenges of a patriarchal society. The author examines select works, including "The House of Cards," "The Magic Drum," and "Gently Falls the Bakula," and argues that her portrayal of women challenges traditional gender roles and emphasizes the importance of women's education and financial independence.

Pandey (2017) explores the feminist themes in the author's works and how they provide a voice to the struggles and experiences of women in India. The author examines select works, including "Dollar Bahu," "Mahashweta," and "The Mother I Never Knew," and argues that these works challenge the societal norms that perpetuate gender discrimination and highlight the need for greater gender equality and women's empowerment.

Anand and Jagannathan (2017) examine the author's short stories and the portrayal of the struggles of Indian women in a patriarchal society. The authors analyze select stories, including "The Old Man and His God," "The Mother I Never Knew," and "How I Taught My Grandmother to Read," and argue that her works highlight the importance of women's

education, financial independence, and agency in challenging societal norms and empowering women.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the selected works by Sudha Murthy provide a comprehensive and analytical study of the events happening around the life of women. Through her writing, Murthy sheds light on the struggles, challenges, and triumphs of women from different walks of life. She highlights the importance of education, independence, and empowerment for women and how these factors can help them break free from societal norms and expectations. Murthy's works also touch upon important issues such as gender inequality, child marriage, dowry, and domestic abuse. By bringing these issues to the forefront, she encourages readers to reflect on their own beliefs and biases and work towards creating a more equitable and just society for all. Overall, Sudha Murthy's writing provides a powerful and thought-provoking exploration of the experiences of women in India. It serves as a reminder that there is still much work to be done to ensure that women can live their lives with dignity, respect, and equality.

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