

## Moral Lessons in Sudha Murthy's Children Stories

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### Abstract

Stories play a prominent role in shaping the personality of children from the tender age. Exposing to the stories will develop a broad sense and analysing capacity. Sudha Murthy's stories are encapsulated with morals and ethical values. These stories orient them to build self-reliance and aesthetic sense. The characters in her stories motivate children and help them to acquire the tradition and culture in the modern generation. These help them to develop a positive attitude and familiar with problems, miseries, merits and demerits theoretically. The soul and spirit of morality have been transmitted to children from generation to generation through stories. Stories play a significant role in the mental growth and character-building of children. Storybooks are a wonderful source of inspiration and lay a strong foundation for their future life. Reading storybooks helps children to increase their confidence, handle emotions, and cope up with problems. It also develops their imagination power, language skills, and learning. The multi-faceted prolific children's author Sudha Murthy's contribution to the field of children's literature is a hallmark in Indian English literature. Her children's stories dealt with the importance of family bonds and concern towards society and fellow beings. The characters in her stories help the children to understand our culture and tradition. The paper focuses on the moral values inculcated in Sudha Murthy's short stories.

**Keywords:** Story, Personality, Ethics, Character, Human Values, Life Lessons.

### INTRODUCTION

India has vast tradition and culture since centuries. It stood the nation in the prominent place among the world's nations. Since there are several genres in literature, stories stand in a unique position. Ages ago philosophy, ethics and morals are transmitted from generation to generation through the vehicle of story only. The genre story has an oral tradition. It passed generations orally. For example, the stories of Panchatantra, Vikram and Betal stories. Since centuries literature is acting a bridge to connect generations. India is a unique land with a rich heritage of culture. Our vast culture and tradition are projected in Indian Literature. Short Story is a genre that has moral insight and gives a new perspective. Short stories for children enhance their life. The genre of children's literature encompasses a wide range of works, including fairy tales, lullabies, fables, folk tales, stories from classics, picture books, etc. Hence, Children's literature is juvenile literature comprising stories, magazines, poems, and books that are created for children. The aim is to entertain, instruct and enlighten young minds. Children's literature emerged as a distinct and independent form of literature in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it developed luxuriantly and was claimed as the recognized branch of literature. Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, A. A. Milne's *Winnie-the Pooh*, and Munro Leaf's *Story of Ferdinand*, J.K Rowling's *Harry Potter* are popular children's books. Even in the contemporary society, it stands by a prominent place among the genres of literature. India can be considered the 'cradle of children's literature'. Our rich oral traditions and the incredible Panchatantra stories proved this. India also has tremendous storytelling traditions as in other

ancient cultures of the world. A.K. Ramanujan says that stories in Indian families are ‘just a grandmother away’. The refined structure and abundant use of imagery of the oral and written tradition is reflected in the children's literature. Panchatantra stories were told by Vishnusharama to his disciples as a part of instruction on the good life and living. They are practical and interesting stories that contain the wisdom of ages. They are the unique contribution of India to the world of children's literature. These stories teach mankind the basic knowledge and wisdom that make life fuller, richer, and happier. The encompassing Panchatantra stories have morals, life lessons, wit, animals, values, humour, ethics everything in it. We are all grown up with hearing such wonderful stories. Thus culturally significant children's books hold the greatest relevance to present realistic images to young readers reflecting the realities in plot, characterization, language, setting, and style. C.S Lewis said, “Writing a children's story is the best art form for something you have to say”. Plenty of popular writers like R K Narayan, Satyajit Ray, Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Prem Chand, Rabindranath Tagore, Amir Khusro, Mahasweta Devi, M.T Vasudevan Nair, T.P Kailasam, Sudha Murthy have explored this art form in their languages as well as in English. Sudha Murthy's children's books contain a well-knitted story with contemporary themes and settings, well-illustrated with a fresh perspective.

The aim of the research paper is to study the morals imbibed through the stories of Sudha Murthy. The present research topic “The Essence of Morals in Children's Literature in special reference with the Stories of Sudha Murthy” has been taken up. The Children's Literature helps students to develop their imaginary skills at the same time it helps them to build their personality. Stories assist the child to learn about his culture and tradition. By reading stories children develop creativity because stories act as stimulatory labs and nourish their abilities. These stories dealt with challenges and solutions, and humorous instances and accounts of fictions and real life. Sudha Murthy is undoubtedly a widely-read author from India and an eminent writer in English and Kannada. Her books are translated into more than 15 languages. She is an engineering teacher, the chairperson of Infosys Foundation, and the author of many books. Her books include novels, story collections, non-fiction, and most of her books are meant for young readers. They showcase many themes like family bonds, social issues, and Indianness in simple and lively language. Along with her contribution to the field of literature, she also works for social causes, women empowerment, health care, and education. She is a celebrated Indian author, an iconic woman, and a great philanthropist. She tries to bring children into the habit of reading by setting up about 50,000 school libraries. Her witty yet insightful narrative made the children explore the world of books. Some of her works for children which enhance the young minds are *How I Taught My Grandmother and Other Stories*, *Grandma's Bag of stories*, *The Magic the Lost Temple*, *The Bird with Golden wings*, *The Gopi Dairies*, *Magic Drum*, and *Other Favourite Stories*, *How the Onion Got its Layers*, *How the Sea Became Salty* and many mythology books for children. She is the recipient of many prestigious honors like the Attimabbe award, Karnataka Rajyotsava award, R.K Narayan Award, Life Time Achievement Award, Padmasree award by the Indian Government, etc.

Sudha Murthy has played a remarkable role by playing innumerable stories in the Children's Literature. In this contemporary society, she stands in a prominent place, because her stories are encapsulated with Indian traditions and cultures in spreading the values and ethics among children. Her collection of story books like *How I Taught my Grandmother to Read and write and Other Stories*, *Grandma's Bag of Stories*, *Bird with Golden Wings and Other Stories* and *Magic Drum and Other Favourite Stories* belong to this category. The book “How I Taught my Grandmother to Read and Write and Other Stories” is the collection of finest stories. These stories have engraved with a flavour of common lives of Indian society. Most of these stories have drawn from Sudha Murthy's personal life and experience. Through these stories she has tried to teach life lessons to children, so she has become a role model to the youth. Sudha Murthy has a great passion towards Indian mythology and ancient Indian Scriptures. She has conveyed her stories in simple touching language, so these catch the attention of the young readers and inspire them to read further. She is very careful in language and word selection of the story writing. Sudha

Murthy has a special feature of choosing Indianised characters and terminology without translating the word into English in her stories, this feature made her stories very nearer to the children. She is also mastery of telling stories with pictures which pass a great message and spellbound the youngsters. Sometimes she has buffed fantasy into the reality. For example, in the story "When Yama called; Grandma's Bag of stories". Her stories are knitted with the themes of socio fantasy with moral and ethical affairs and science fiction is never a cup of tea in her stories.

The characters in the stories of Sudha Murthy are the common characters from our day to day life, if we once start reading her story we spell bound to it till completion of it. These characters are acting as a bridge to connect the reader and the theme of the stories. She is very keen in portraying her character of the stories. The stories have the unity of effect in the narration of the appearance, dialogues and actions. Most of her characters strive hard for survival. Sudha Murthy's characters convey the problems and solutions of the common man. Sometimes her stories take children into a different world. The stories "Amma What's your Duty" "The Secret" and "My Biggest Mistake" are the ardent pictures of the young and their approach of moulding with the teachings. Her stories move around a commoner in the society. The stories of her teach children the art of living with compassion and generous to the fellow being in his contemporaries' societies. So the stories provide avenue to them to attain a personality to achieve the goals in the personal life. The child learns self-reliance, humanity and gratitude from her stories. Her stories are the simplest solutions to the real life obstacles.

Till to a few decades' children used to learn stories from their grandparents. Due to LPG the nuclear families have grown up mother and father was busy with the jobs. The accessibility with the grandparents has diminished, so the process of storytelling has almost shelved in our societies. Child's education is also not catering to the gap of storytelling. They confined to the electronic world only. There is an essence of developing of instructions to learn the stories in the educational intuitions. It keeps the child away from the rote method of leaning system and provides a platform of entertainment along with injecting morals. Sudha Murthy's stories "The Golden Fish and the Demon: The Bird with Golden Wings" is the story of a woman, Laxmi transforms into an ugly devil with her greedy trait. Similarly, the story "Payasam for a Bear" is a story of keeping promises. The story "The precious Rupee; The Bird with Golden Wings" teaches the importance of working hard. The story "The Way You Look At" is a real picture of human, often we see the things it appears to us. It is the portray of human attitude towards an object, similarly in our life most of the instances and things appear to us. Through "Doing What You Like is Freedom"; "How I Taught my Grandmother to Read and Write and Other Stories" Sudha Murthy conveys the child be given the strong fundamentals to stand on their own legs. The child should be given the freedom to choose their own way to grow like an independent person. Her books convey the essential qualities of life. In the story "Books for the Cook" enlightens the important qualities of a good teacher. "The Silly Rich Boy" is the story of Anil who learnt lesson from cheaters. The truthfulness is a quality; it helps to shape the character to attain success in the personal life of all. It is the moral served through the story "The Seed of Truth" and the story; "The Banana Tree Princess" are the symbol of truth. Here the story teaches the essence of truthfulness in day to day life. Since majority of the stories are engraved with supernatural powers it catches the sight of the children.

## CONCLUSION

All the stories of Sudha Murthy have touching and inspirational themes. These are apt to the modern society to bring a change in their attitudes. All these stories are dealing with the challenges and entertain with fun. Sudha Murthy's contribution to the Children's Literature of Indian English is one of the hallmarks in the advancement of literature. Her stories dealt with the problems of the family relation, a woman and her problems, societal needs, poverty. All these stories are confined in a moral, when child ends the reading of a story it is known to him. She has portrayed the image of the rural India. It is the conscious aspect of her socio educational and socio cultural conditions of the countryside. Sudha Murthy's children's storybooks

demonstrate the traditional method of storytelling in which kids feel the presence of a loving grandmother. These books return us to the old ways of molding the young generation through narrating moral and character-building stories. In earlier times elderly people in the family took the responsibility of nourishing the children through their affection and inspiring storytelling. But now we are very busy that don't find time to take care of our children. In such a situation the storybooks of Sudha Murthy inculcate in our children the values of honesty, hard work, love, affection, sincerity, togetherness, etc. In everyone's life childhood is the most memorable and wonderful period. The memories and inputs of this stage of life form the future. According to John Locke's theory of Tabula Rasa and Kohlberg's theory of moral judgment, the knowledge attained and experience gained in this stage of childhood leave an everlasting impact on future life. Children's literature imparts plenty of occasions and opportunities for young ones to broaden their horizons. It develops their emotional intelligence and creative power. In this sense, Sudha Murthy's children's storybooks are a treasure house of moral and ethical values for children.

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