

Study of Socio-Psychological Conditions of a Married Woman in Changing Paradigm of Society in the Work of Sudha Murty

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ABSTRACT

Sudha Murthy a disciplined writer, a technocrat with the most innovative and skilful mind has been highly esteemed with awards for her philanthropic and literary acquisition . She is writing in the back ground of Indian English Literature. The works of recent Indian writers like Anita Desai, Ruth Praver Jahabwala, Mahashweta Devi Shashi Deshpande, Narayan Sahgal, Shobhaa De, Eunice De Souza, Jhumpa Lahiri, Arundhati Roy and Sudha Murthy has not only enjoyed a large and international reading public but has also made us to think and rethink over the serious matters. They had acclimatized with the discernments of balance of our Indian conventions and expect more from the foreseeable future. Her novels are fascinating; they are understandable, unique and stimulate spiritually the readers to aspire and to calibrate their mental outlook. She has published Dollar Bahu, House of Cards, Mahashweta, The Bird with Golden Wings, Wise and Otherwise: A Salute to life, The Old man and his God, The Day I Stopped Drinking Milk, A Wedding in Russai, The Accolades Galore , Changing India, House of Cards, Sweet Hospitality, Gently falls the Bakula, Fasalcut chiefly through penguin. This article focuses on the shaky foundation of marriage of Mridula and Sanjay and the breach of trust made by Sanjay. The protagonist Mridula didn't expend money because she wanted to build a financially secure and harmonious future. Her husband had manipulated her completely due to her ignorance and foolishness by secretly giving lakhs of money to his mother and sister. The breach of trust made her paralysed and she was disenchanting and absconded herself. Heartless judiciousness, manipulation and power destroy a marital relationship and the house built insubstantially was dreadfully collapsed.

1. Introduction

Sudha Murthy draws one's attention to the contemplation of Indian consciousness that bestowed through legendary episode, characters, their saga and the relation situations. She dives deep into the heart of the characters and focus on the absurdity going on in them. She writes instinctively as one seems as their own story. She focuses on the atmosphere of native grace in her writings and the readers become well acquainted with the Karnataka places and ascertain the glimpses of villages. The names of the characters are also from Karnataka. Sudha Murthy's art and mind is reflected in the creation of her novels. Sudha Murthy in House of cards focuses on the disposition of the people when they have more money. She also describes the pretentiousness, insensibility greediness of the characters mostly males. The novel House of Cards presents the vicissitudes in the marital life of Mridula and Sanjay. In this novel the protagonist Mridula is from Aladahalli a top student, unobjectionable, pure at heart, knowledgeable and possesses attractive large twinkling eyes and also long dark hairs on which she used to put a string of flowers. Her family was full of content, not pretentious or money hungry. She thinks that everybody is like her. She possesses enormous enthusiasm for life and unlimited energy for reading, cooking and sketching. She enjoyed every beautiful moment of life and always excelled in school. She was working as a teacher in Government high School.

2. Life of Women after Marriage

The protagonist Mridula was attracted to the young man Dr. Sanjay in a marriage ceremony in Hubli. He was also enchanted by her physical attractiveness, but felt abhorrent

about the way he had trusted her. Sanjay was passionate about his work. He was tall, with well defined sharp features and was not as fair as she was. He had curly hairs and his built was like an athlete. He didn't take life so seriously and works with the Govt. hospital in Bombay initially. She also felt an attraction towards him. They belong to the same community and speak the same language. Sanjay was a having a short arm due to an accident but Mridula never commented on his short arm and nor about his defect and she questioned him. She was genuine and full of affection. A sense of protection and belonging pulled him towards her. Remembering the words of his friend Alex that no Indian girl would make a move first he proposed her through a letter. The Mridula's parents Bheemanna and Rukuma also agreed with the marriage proposal of Mridula and Sanjay. Bheemanna was also open, straightforward and friendly man. His native was T. Narasipura and his parent's talks were contradictory as day and night. His mother Ratnamma though uneducated was smart, bold, talked less, decisive and possesses knowledge about famines and how to handle them. His late father Appa was timid and used to accept defeat easily. Due to Sanjay's handicapness with a short arm his father use to reflect his thoughts:

Every person is an island. You need a bridge to connect two islands. That bridge is called a relationship. In life, real affection comes not through hiding but through expressing your true feelings (38).

His mother also retrospects him not to articulate his proneness in front of others, as others will take advantage of

him. Sanjay's mother was his backbone and she had provided adventurousness to make him a good doctor. He followed his mother's admonitions instead of his father's. She also didn't have any disagreement regarding the alliance. After her husband's death his mother acclimatized herself with the selling of flowers, incense, camphor, bananas, coconuts and other puja items to the pilgrims coming to Narasimha temple. She also has a profitable money lending business. When she lent money she charged an extremely high interest. Her entire world was money and she kept an account of everything. Gold wasn't a jewellery to her it was an asset and an investment. She thought that Sanjay would marry a doctor and open a nursing home. She advises her daughter Lakshmi to save money for the rainy day. Lakshmi was a spendthrift; she competed with the members of ladies club. Her daughter Lakshmi had suffered humiliation, encountered jealousy and shrewdness in the joint family.

3. Ups and Downs of Life

After the marriage of Mridula and Sanjay, Sanjay got a job at Victoria Govt. hospital Bangalore. Life in Bangalore was tough for Mridula; she worked in Yelahanka (a suburb of Bangalore) High School with joy and had started her new life with Kantaaamma's help wife of her School Principal. Mridula earned more than Sanjay. He also gave his salary to Mridula and told her to manage the money. She kept the accounts and insisted that Sanjay keep some money in his wallet. Together they paid the rents and use to send some money to Ratnamma and the remaining money was spend on household expenses. Mridula saved some money and overtime they brought a TV, Fridge and a new scooter for Sanjay. They were contented in their life. Both the women Mridula and her sister-in-law were totally different. Mridula was a money saver and Lakshmi a spendthrift. Lakshmi's husband Shankar was normally a bank clerk and earned money by taking bribe. He owned a big house with all amenities and overpriced furniture. After a few months Sanjay got admission to the post-graduation in Gynaecology and they shifted to Vijaynagar (West area of Bangalore). Eventually, Sanjay had finished his studies and started working as a doctor and lecturer in Govt. hospital in Bangalore. Going through the ups and down in his profession he transformed himself according to the new circumstances. On the other hand Mridula was naive, plain hearted and her mind was still an open book. Sanjay's friend Dr. Alexander named as Alex was dark, dynamic, popular, a smart dresser and an excellent speaker. Alex insisted him to start a private nursing clinic with partnership, as Sanjay was an idealist and intelligent person and meant to take care of his patients with full responsibility. Sudha Murthy evaluates the importance of money through her character Alex who reminds Sanjay:

Money is a useful tool. It's like a knife - you can either kill a person with it or you can cut an apple. It's up to you to decide how to use it (109).

Mridula also comprehensively bolstered him to do a private practise. She was against of dissipating too much money and she only needed was her husband's contentment. Both of them have taken a loan and to repay it she was habitually working diligently and for long hours. She did not travel by an auto-rickshaw or spend money on stitching

blouses to match her saris. She didn't expend money because she wanted to build a financially secure and harmonious future. Lakshmi made beguilement of her that she doesn't dress perfectly. She was doing job not for her satisfaction but to meet the needs of materialistic life and also she became ready to give tuitions in the evenings as a financial atonement to her family. She mortgaged her jewellery to start the nursing home. She had also repaid the loan for their home but they had not moved out of the apartment as to reduce the expenses. The nursing home did well and money started to flow in abundance to him. She thought that her son Sishir would need money for further education so she did not want to spend money on a new home. Sanjay pronounced her to look after his bank accounts and keep control. He acclimated more money as twenty-five thousand to the normal delivery. The husband and wife were contradistinctive poles apart in their idealism. Sanjay's sister built up a new house, her husband Shankar had taken the voluntary retirement and started the new business with the partner they got cheated by the partner and everything was lost as their house and business. Lakshmi needed thirty lakhs to come out of tough situation. RoseMary managed all accounts of the nursing home properly. Mridula informed her mother -in- law about the need of thirty lakhs to Lakshmi but she told she did not want to interfere. Mridula agreed to help Lakshmi in their bad times when she seeks her husband's consent he replied in negative:

Mridula , we don't have that kind of money. I've lived in their house for two years and seen how they live. They show off too much. I don't want to give them a loan because they'll never return it. If Shankar agrees, I can give him a job at the nursing home with a monthly salary. But they must stay separately and not in our house. I can't help them more than this. That's my final say. (139)

4. Mental Agony of Married Women

She felt uneasy after listening the decision of her husband. She remained quiet. She and her husband were living in the four bedroom house of JP Nagar (residential area in south Bangalore). They possess three cars. Mridula had become the principal of the School in Jayanagar (residential neighbourhood of Bangalore). Their Son Shishir was stubborn, and pampered by his father. The three servants were honest. She did not want to leave her job because that job had held her to start a hospital in difficult times and it was a oxygen for her. Repeated success had made Sanjay confident. Sanjay became successful due to Mridula's efforts, her hard work and determination and her full support. He also embraced the challenges coming in the way of life. Alex and Sanjay split the profits and they have no problems. He had learnt a lot about money management. He did not figure to declare all his earnings to the Income Tax department. He possessed black money as well as white. All bribes were paid by using black money. Sanjay did not tell anything to Mridula she was kept incognizant of it. It was because Mridula thinks it immorally. The other male character Anita's husband Alex also cheated Anita, deceived her by keeping an affair with anyone else and had used two condoms in her absence in her own bedroom. This shocked Anita and also to Mridula when she came to know about it. The hypocrisy and the dubiousness of males are

well apparent when they have more money and it exposes the chicanery in the marital relationships.

Sanjay's nursing home had been aggrandized to a hundred-bed institution and he used to always check the accounts. He doesn't trust anybody with money matters even also Rosemary her receptionist. He had accelerated himself into the corrupt practices and earned more money. Mridula also give lessons to his son to save money for the tough times. Sanjay always took side of his son even if he is wrong. Sanjay teaches his Son how to earn money and further tells that how money is the weakness of most people. This attitude of Sanjay was also a mislead to Mridula. Mridula argued with her husband not to teach the wrong things to her son because her upbringing was different than her husband and tells him that her son would go astray. She became restless and extremely sensitive due to the provocative talk of her son and her husband. If her son Shishir didn't like the homemade food, he didn't use to eat at home and his father also adjures him to eat outside. Sanjay was completely spoiling his son by inculcating him the wrong values of life. Shishir had started to rebel against his mother but not with his father. Mridula had instilled honesty and hard work to her son and he used to share and acclimatize those things with her.

Sanjay was callous towards Mridula he appreciated everyone except her. The discrimination of Mridula began at home. Sanjay had more faith in his sister than his wife. She thought money had taken her happiness. Sanjay thought that Mridula must apprehend to live life from Lakshmi. He acted polished in front of others but in front of his wife he seems too much brutal. He criticizes her and finds fault of her. He was a dictator in formulating his opinions. Mridula didn't know that the real life consisted of selfish people. In any relationship compassion binds people together. As Sanjay was out to Malaysia to attend the international conference there was an urgent need of documents to the pharmaceutical company from his nursing home. Mridula didn't go to nursing home except on Ayudha Puja but in search of file she went to the nursing home. At that moment, something shattered into pieces. The foundation of trust has been cracked. She felt that she was drowning and had lost confidence in him. She was cheated by him from last five years. Sanjay used to say: I don't want to handle money. You manage it and I will manage the nursing home (183).

She came to know the counterfoil of Rs ten lakhs DD sent to Ratnamma. About it, when she had asked her husband will to give money to his mother at that time he had rejected her opinion disregarding. Money had changed the attitude and thoughts of Sanjay. He had sent the money to his mother but she was told by him that he had not sent it. She realized that he was a practiced deceiver. He had also given a gift deed of car to Anil his nephew. When Mridula inquired about the car he told that it was a company's car. It was also exposed that there was a joint fixed deposit for fifty lakh in Sanjay and Lakshmi's name. Sanjay had bought a house for Lakshmi and it had been rented out, which also was kept secret to Mridula. Anil had also gifted gold to Lakshmi through numerous cheques made out to Prathiba jewellers in Chickpet that was around fifty- lakhs a year. On beyond this he was also going to give Lakshmi ten

thousand rupees on Gowri festival. Her husband had manipulated her completely due to her ignorance and foolishness. Sanjay's cunning nature had encouraged all these activities. After knowing his husband's dubiousness, she even did not felt to close the cupboard of the nursing home and ran back into the car. According to Mridula, Sanjay was a dishonest, untrustworthy and dubious person he had stabbed in the back of his own wife. He was something that appeared one way but was truly another.

She had lost all her confidence, aggrieved, and shocked and also became annoyed. She didn't believe that her faithful husband Sanjay had cheated her. He had inculcated restlessness in her. She had lived with complete belief and trusted him from the first day of the marriage and condemning her belief he had maintained parallel financial elsewhere. He acted like an honest husband but he had stabbed her in the back. In a marriage she had trusted a stranger, married him with his short arm, and respected him. There was excitement and exhilaration that entered her soul. It was the most joyous kind of bond with him, but the bond the trust had been ruptured by him and the crack followed. At the moment she realized the selfishness and the materialistic qualities of him. Not only this he has upraised his family's socioeconomic dignity but also eventually indulged himself in the wrong way of budgetary. When Sanjay came to know the real fact of Mridula's sadness he was not bothered he thought that he earns money and possess the full power on money he can give it to anyone as it depends on his own mind. He thought why he had to ask others to whom to give money and whom to not, after all they are his mother and sister. The cardinal principal of life was thrashed by Sanjay. Trust is something that is difficult to establish. It is very fragile that needs to be taken care of. Once trust breaks or shatters into pieces, it is very difficult to rebuild it.

The trust between the Mridula and Sanjay was shattered and dismayingly Mridula shifted her bag and baggage to the guest room and had locked the door from inside. She burst into tears all the time and did not want closeness of anyone. She stopped feeling hungry as well. She wanted to converse with anyone to lower her encumbrance but there was nobody to talk to her. When her friend Anita came to know about the situation she gently told that Anil (Sanjay's nephew) had also deceived her. Mridula elucidates Anita:

Anita, it is not about money. Money can be earned and lost. It is about faith that a wife has in her husband. That's more valuable than money and gold. Faith sustains a marriage and brings joy to the family. Without it we have nothing. How can Sanjay destroy the faith and trust I had in him? (186)

She further told that Sanjay might have told to her about his intentions but must not have cheated her. To get somewhat relief from the burden she met Kantamma, she advised her that good and bad times are a part of life and women must have calmness in all situations. She was trapped in her marriage, defrauded by her own companion. In one's life money has the dexterity to actualize, ameliorate, glue people's lives and relationships, but it can also annihilate people's life

and relationships, as that happened with Mridula. She confederated the relaxation technique classes, in which she was instructed that the main reason of unhappiness is disappointment. She became acquainted about disappointment that it disappears with detachment. Detachment prevails knowledge and knowledge is enhanced by dhyana. So it is important for one to learn the technique of dhyana. Mridula was more emotionable and she needed more time to be conscious of the real world. If she was brought up in a tough atmosphere by her parents, she might have adjusted fast. Her student named Vani requested her to visit a psychiatrist Dr. Rao thrice a week. He tried to explain and understand her problem. She also shared all things with him. When she asked about the importance of money in life, He elucidated:

Yes money is important in life. It's a change triggering catalyst. Money brings power, status and confidence. Money brings out the best and the worst in the people. It's a magnifying glass. When a person becomes rich, his inner desires are free to come to the forefront. If a selfish man becomes rich, he spends money on himself, but if a generous person becomes wealthy, he shares it with others. It's difficult to find people who aren't touched by money (213).

Dr. Rao also thought her not to worry about his husband and not to expect anything from him and the hindrance caused by money in her life. According to her husband she was an idealist. He had always ridiculed and dominated her and had affected her confidence terribly. He also did not know that he had lost faith in her. She became depressed and nervous and left her husband's house forever. She was having her job, her School and her Hubli village. Sanjay's life became very difficult in Mridula's absence; he did not sleep properly, nor ate properly, he seems to an orphan by himself. He also got lesson from Rosemary and Joseph's love counting happiness from a single bouquet of flowers. Anita also took side of Mridula and talked on phone to Sanjay. She explicated:

I've Known Mridula well for the last twenty three years. She' shared all our difficulties. Your mother or sister or son can't take her place. Shishir will marry and have his own family. After that, a father is just a guest. Regarding your mother, the less said the better. Your sister just looks for a chance to make money off of you. Nobody can match Mridula in terms of simplicity, innocence and affection. I'm sorry that I have taken the liberty to speak so much about your personal issues. But I have to listen to my conscience."(222).

5. The House Collapsed

Sanjay was brainwashed from the straightforward talk of Anita and got a good lesson. He apprehended that his sister was a selfish lady who only talked to him about the directorship and about only money. She was not interested in his brother's personal life. Shankar her husband also utter bad words about Mridula that she is useless and a village girl. They talked about Mridula so because it was Sanjay's fault that he used to talk about her so in front of them. His son Shishir also expects his wife to live subordinate. But the girl expected bride Neha didn't

agreed to live as a doormat. Marriage was not the final destination for her. She wanted equal partnership in neither marriage nor the subordination of the wife. He thought of her mother and actualized that she was an ideal woman. Mridula suffered and sacrificed her life and remains as a nonentity. She was sensible to the denunciation made by her husband. She goes away to release herself from the emotional obligation. She felt that it is better to be alone and happy than to be with someone who makes you feel inferior, undesirable and inadequate.

Mridula was honest, caring and bold. Honesty in Mridula was not the mark of any particular class nor it was related to her parents but it was natural which springs in her. But her husband had always neglected her and takes her for granted. Without her help he would not have built up an empire. He even had not thanked her who had made his money more valuable. He informs that he had become successful by his own hard work not with anyone's help. His son Shishir had reminded him that home is not built of four walls but the person inside the house. Each partner had to play a role to keep marriage flourish. The breach of trust made her paralysed and she was disenchanted and absconded herself. Stuart Y. Barbara mentions that:

The success of marriage depends on the effective working together of both husband and wife, because each has specific responsibilities set out by God for the permanence and quality of the marriage. Still, the factor of responsibility in the marriage for husband and wife must not be interpreted as a gender-marked-role-identity. Rather, it is an integral aspect of the relationship mandated by God since creation, for harmony and stability in the home (31).

False appearance of Sanjay has destroyed the trust in marriage. Trust is an indispensable requirement for any relationship. Dissimulation is incorrect and devastates trust and respect and has no place in a marriage. The hypocritical sister-in-law Lakshmi never worried about Mridula, she only wanted to talk about the business with her brother. Her relationship with her brother was only money based, she only thought of her comfort, power and material security by misleading his brother. She proved a great money master who got control on other people's wealth. Sanjay realized that she was only interested in her new post of a director in Sanjay's firm than her brother's pain. Lakshmi's husband Shankar also abused about Mridula and had called her a villager and a useless thing. These remarks were also hurt by Sanjay. He came to know about the thoughts and selfishness of his sister Lakshmi and her husband Shankar. There was complete emptiness without Mridula in Sanjay's life. He had not connected with his wife and has not carefully planned the finances of the future. He had become a complete orphan and had lost hope in nursing home and in everything.

He realized his mistake and ran to take her back. In Hubli Mridula was noticed swinging with a free mind without any bondage during the Ugadi time. She was not like everybody but she was different. She thought to live everyday to the fullest and enjoyed every beautiful minute. The aftermath of

infidelity changed her. Within a minute she noticed that Sanjay was holding the swing with his good arm trying to engage himself in the healing process to restore trust. He had come back to take his wife with him. The novelist Sudha Murthy castigates the behavioural attitudes of the people through the medium of her fiction and writes her novels with happy endings.

6. Conclusion

Sudha Murthy has painted this novel *House of Cards* with mere reality touching the whimsical and hypocritical chauvinistic attitude of males. In this novel the marital relationship of the protagonist is fragile and is easily destroyed by her traitor husband who had cheated her.

Their development of life was completely different depending on the attitudes of their parents. All human beings are not pure in heart, some are liars and some are selfish. Mridula loved fully in all circumstances to him and walked with him on the thorny path of success. But her husband Sanjay stood a noxious invader who had provided hurt to her emotionally. Sanjay had never bridged with Mridula with true feelings. He was the boss, he has the big ego of success and he had never established a good communication with her which shows her destructive nature of infidelity, on the other hand she had backed personally to him on the tour de force of life.

It shows an emotional infidelity of cheating the wife on the financial matter. No doubt he was intelligent and had kept his secret well and felt prone to his sister's and mother's selfishness. Due to his dubious attitude she felt that it is better to be alone and happy than to be with someone who makes her feel inferior, undesirable and not good enough.

Without informing his wife Sanjay had given money to his mother and a car to his nephew Anil and opened a joint account with his sister Lakshmi. On gaining more success with the help of his wife, he had cheated and dominated her

through his dubious nature and Mridula wondered that she had not got a good reward of saving for the future. Afterwards he came to know his mistake and was maddened and resentfully ran after her with a ray of hope to bring her back.

Mridula struggled with reason and emotion. It happened due to the difference in genes, upbringings and the environment in which they had grown up. The inculcated values, the different cultures and different economic status of their families made her to suffer at her husband's hand. More the money people get more selfish they would become and the result provides a destructive harm and the infidelity of their close ones. Heartless judiciousness, manipulation and power destroy a marital relationship and the house built insubstantially gets dreadfully collapsed.

The paper suggests that women should be gained equal rights and they should not be dominated' subordinated or cheated by patriarchy or their husbands. They should have equal rights as their husbands have. Females must also raise their consciousness and must not get fool by anyone. It's better to be honest with the partner or spouse about the financial state from the get go. One must not break the trust of one's partner; if the trust is broken one cannot have the same again if you live together again. The house build of cards get demolish easily. Owed to the dubiousness in behavioural attitude of Sanjay, marriage a social sacred institution has cast away its holiness and pertinence in the novel.

Surely, Sudha Murthy pen out the real experiences of her life and exposes female characters to manifest their pain, yearnings and sufferings in this hypocritical world, where there is gender discrimination and subordinate consideration of women in pecuniary phenomenon of life and also she has juxtaposed the pretentiousness, insensibility, greediness of the patriarchal world by means of this novel.

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