



Non-Fictional Ideological Values: Sudha Murthy's *The Old Man and His God*

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ABSTRACT

The Old Man and His God: Discovering the Spirit of India by Sudha Murthy is the real spirit for the beloveds who love the stories and tales' reading. This is not only the spirit for Indian but for the world audience who love the Indian literature. The non-fictional ideological values, morality, ethics, honesty and ethos are completely expressed through this genre. Being an author, social worker, teacher and a good lady, it is simply recorded by Sudha Murthy's sensitive mind that the small experiences with small-small journeys are very hearts touching. These all experiences are with the villagers, slum dwellers, men, women, students and educationists, etc. It was clearly said by Mrs. Murthy that our mind is a storehouse of lot of stories and tales. She painted many lovely stories with the help of strangers who came in life. The struggle, hardship and suffer of a common man is painted very beautifully with self-experiences after self-realization through her life journey. The blind man in a little Shiva Temple offers the author shelter and piece in the midst of a storm and emerges as the most generous, unselfish soul; that she has ever met. A little stone (Katta) under a banyan tree in a small village in Karnataka is the world's best place to take rest and forget each and every type of burden of life for some time. The little stone is the best urban councilor's office where everybody would be counseled to any villager because there everyone listens, sharers, discuss, chats and enjoys a talk. This is completely missed in modern world and metro cities.

Simply and directly it is observed that *The Old Man And His God: Discovering the Spirit of India* by Sudha Murthy is an awakening collection of twenty five stories and snapshots of varied facts of human nature and a mirror to the souls of the people of India. The ideological values, moral values of family, brotherhood, relationship of friends, family members and relatives, honesty and simplicity of a blind poor person, the rural philosophy under the banyan tree, and the freedom of speech of a literate lady are beautifully painted in the form of many stories. The each and every part of the

society and the ideology of humanity, are shown through this book under the title *The Old Man And His God: Discovering the spirit of India*. The small experiences from the family to the unique institution like the INFOSYS, and from the small village like Shiggaoan to the India's best metro city like Bangalore have been ideally painted.

KEYWORDS

Honesty, freedom of speech, relationship, human nature, hospitality, poverty and love

RESEARCH PAPER

Introduction:

The purpose of writing this article is to be enlightened to the morality, values, ideology, ethics, ethos, spirit and help-selfness of Sudha Murthy's literary piece, *The Old Man And His God: Discovering the Spirit of India*. It is a non-fictional literary piece and a full of values, morality, ideology and positivity which is minutely observed and experienced from her life. There are many travelogues from Dr. Sudha Murthy's life which are drafted in words with the prime permission of the concern people. The author has drafted in this book many stories while meeting many places and many people in different situation. Dr. Sudha Murthy has full of experiences from her small village Shiggaoan (Karnataka) as a village girl and from Bangalore as the chairperson of the INFOSYS Foundation, and a social worker as well a successful educationist. Being one of the active faculties of Computer Science, she is a wonderful observer and a popular author in English as well as in Kannada. She has full of ideologies, values and moralities in her literature. A non-fictional piece, *The Old Man And His God: Discovering the spirit of India* is a collection of twenty-five ideal stories which are the combination of all types of experiences. The ideology of each and every part of the society is expressed, the morality of the life is shown and the values about how to live a life are painted through this literary piece. The present literary genre of Mrs. Murthy signifies the psychology, philosophy, philanthropy and ideology of a common man that came in Mrs. Murthy's life. *The Old Man And His God: Discovering the Spirit of India* has heartwarming stories and some of the thoughts stay on in our mind longer than any other author.

The students, religious people, friends, relatives, natives, colleagues, travelers, and so many people who came in her life and she keenly observed them with her expressive views. All her expressive views converted into creative thoughts and drafted in the book. One of the travelogues *The Old Man And His God* teaches her the values of life. It gives the complete sense that how to live real life. Money is only the mean, the supplementary object in life and not a life. Here the author criticized the modernity. How the people are running behind money that they have considered; money is everything in the life. The feminist approach is also painted dominantly. The female is the uncommon character in maximum stories somewhere the female is dominant with male characters also. But the female is the core character in all stories. The relationship of the family members especially between two brothers is portrayed through *A Tale of Two Brothers*. The human nature, human behavior, small journeys and the journey of life is also painted, and the ideology, morality and values are shown through the various travelogues. The Buddhist philosophy, the sweet hospitality, the friendship, the love among family members, the holy scripter, the holy Indian land, and the poverty is ideologically painted. These above values are at the center of travelogues. The day

to day life experiences are snapshotted in the form of stories. In each and every snap stories; ideology, morality, values, and ethics are shown in one of the characters. These characters are very common but these uncommon values are in uncommon characters, especially females.

The present non-factious ideology by Mrs. Murthy not only focuses on the rural life but on the urban life also. The morality of an ideal life, the family relationship, the ideology of society, the religious ideology, the ideal hospitality and the values of mother's love are ideally expressed in the form of present literary genre. After going through her book *The Old Man And His God: Discovering the Spirit of India*, the reader comes to know the real meaning of life. And how we live life and how should we live it. There are lot of things to learn from this book; not just charity, not just being kind but being true to mankind and to you and others too. The most important lesson is to be content with the things what you have in life and not to feel sad for the things what you don't have in life. Being a beloved of her writing, I never doubt about Mrs. Murthy's pristine and true efforts to portrait the real picture of the society. She really touched the nerve of the society, about which we usually talks but never implement it in our own life. But if we go through the same, definitely we try to inculcate in life in order to know the real meaning of life. She still focuses on humanity and love for human, humanity and mankind which are more important in day to day life.

'With good attitude you can create heaven around you and a good leader can bring a remarkable change in a team. We realize that it is not necessary that money or fame would be robbing someone of his honesty and simplicity. There is a story about selfishness and generosity. The people show their gratitude to strangers who helped them in the natural disaster like tsunami, how people live happily in poor conditions also. The author enlightens on many things like her trip to Pakistan; about Indian hospitality; about father's selfishness at the moment of his son's illness; about how poor parents can leave a child with special needs because he might be a burden to them later and many more.

Her experiences with the common man reinforce her views on basic essence of human values like unconditional love, affection, compassion, peace, content, empathy, selfless love and service, trust, gratitude, thankfulness, good attitude, great friendship, simplicity, modesty, honesty, mother's sacrifice, philanthropy and other virtues which restores faith in humanity. All the above things which are important for human, humanity and mankind are the ornaments of Mrs. Murthy's writing. These all ornaments are drafted not only in this genre but in the whole literary work by Mrs. Murthy. Whatever the values, ideology and morality showed through the book *The Old Man And His God: Discovering the Spirit of Indian* is non-fictive; is real in the society.

The life is a journey and we meet strange people with the sensitive mind. Sudha Murthy says that she is very lucky because she could encounter with many good experiences that she could share to people. According to Mrs. Murthy, these types of common experiences are experienced and viewed

by all people but it needs to observe recount and recollect. But it is unlucky that no one can observe, recollect and recount the ordinary experiences. Very few ordinary people recollect and draft these types of memories of ordinary people in the form stories and they become popular. The present literary genre, *The Old Man And His God: Discovering the Spirit of India* by Sudha Murthy is contained with the full of characteristics of humanity. All types of humanoid characters' greediness, selfishness, generosity, contentment, ambition, love, hate, hard work, honesty, etc. are beautifully recollected and recounted in the form of moral stories. But these are the ordinary experiences with ordinary people by the extra-ordinary personalities. These all stories are none but the reactions of ordinary people in critical situation. When the ordinary people are in critical situation, they struggle and suffer from their small problems. While suffering a lot, they try to prove themselves in that situation and give a moral message with the ideology, morality, ethics, ethos and values and these values teach us how to live a life.

The Padma Shri award winner, the chairperson of the INFOSYS Foundation who is the first woman engineer in the TELCO and a master in Computer Science is the best administrative person as well as the teacher, has written heart touching stories. Minutely observing, she has recounted and recollected memories in the form of literature. Mrs. Murthy told a story of a banyan tree in a remote village in Karnataka ideologically that gives shelter to travelers and passersby under its shade, and the passerby shares his views, difficulties and troubles to the travelers or other passersby. The stone under the banyan tree where the travelers and passersby sit that they unburden to them. In the ancient time, the people were ready to listen to each other but in modern era no one has time to listen to others. They are alone in the crowdie population. They have gone so much away from each other due to modernity and modern means of communication. The globe has become a small village due to technology and modernity but the people have gone so much away from each other. These are the two sides of a coin. So here loneliness and separation is enlightened through a story of the banyan tree.

The title story: *The Old Man And His God* has an excellent moral message which shows values, ethics, morals, honesty and ethos of the life of old couple. The old blind couple who lives in the Shiva temple gives the author shelter during a night storm. After understanding the critical situation in that stormy night of the old couple, the author shows interest to help financially to them. But they refused very politely an offer of the author, saying that they are very happy with what they have. With the gratification soul, Sudha Murthy got a lesson of life that this ordinary event might happen with anyone. There is another story of how an old lady in a village in Karnataka, out of her sense of responsibility towards the community, asks her to construct toilets for women and how some ladies think that this is her business venture. The selfishness, gratification and satisfaction are defined in the form of the stories. Mrs. Murthy proved that blood is thicker than water but there is a story which

tells us that the biological brothers may become strangers while sons of masters and servants may become brothers. *A Tale of Two Brothers* is beautifully painted picture of two brothers.

The freedom of speech is one of the stories which enlightens on financial problems and crises between husband and wife. Where a maid servant, Tulsi has freedom of speech but a friend of the author, Alka can't speak a single word about her financial problem. The fact is that that Alka a debater, in a university; is known as a "*Queen of Debate*" but she doesn't have freedom of speech and Tulsi is an illiterate lady where she lives in a slum area; she has a freedom of speech. The financial problem of both Tulsi and Alka is same that their husbands have taken advantages of their wives' savings and earnings. It may amount differs or the problem be different but the both the ladies were suffering from financial problems. At least Tulsi could speak and make her free from this problem but so called debater, Alka could not utter a single word against her husband in this financial crises. The reason behind this is a '*Civilized Society*'. No woman has right to freedom to speak in a civilized society as they speak; they will be considered cultureless women. It means that the civilized people should not speak about victim and against the victimhood. It should be thought that the real ideology of a civilized society and a slum. The same difference is shown in one of the stories under a title *The Way You Look at It* that the views of rural and urban women. The rural women who need a precious gift in their life that is to construct a public toilet for ladies in village, and the urban ladies don't have importance of constructed public toilets for ladies as they comment badly. The way they look at it but according to the author, the toilet is more important than the temples, mosques and *gurudwaras* for rural women. Even we don't gain puny. The real puny is not to go in any religious place and pray but to understand the real problem of a common man. Everyone understands their own problems but very few people understand the problem of a common and strive for them. But who strives for others' problem that is spirituality and awakening.

'*R. K. Narayan Award for Literature* recipient, the author has interpreted that how should be a boss and defined what do you mean by Marriage respectively with the characters of Shanti and Yellamma as well as Medha? Mrs. Murthy has given a wonderful message to the private sector people that they cannot choose their boss but with good attitude you can create a heaven around them, and a good leader can bring about remarkable changes in a team. And the poor beggar Yellamma and Medha have proven that the marriage is partnerships where they have share everything. Yellamma and Medha don't have any problem, they do everything together, divided the work between them. They usually ask each other's opinion. If anyone of them can't go out, other fetches alms for both of them. The poorest of the poor couple gave a message to the modern civilized people who considered that the marriage is status and richness, and they flow money like water on marriages. But marriage is a journey where the newly married couple should understand to be together in everything. These words are listened in a ramshackle hut not in a huge civilized bungalow.

The author not only discussed about marriages but orphanages and international relationship of two countries also. It was observed very carefully that the smallest problem of a small family and the sensitive problem of a country also. The author has shown to readers two faces of poverty with orphaned children. The first face is: the poor lady, Leela who works as a maid, is ready to do anything for her adopted daughter's education. And the second face: the one of the office representatives uses money to construct house instead to save a child. The author enlightened on very sensitive issue that is the India-Pakistan separation. How the people are separated and till emotionally attached to their nativity. The author touches the small thing in a family and the critical problem of a country. The family relationship, domestic problems, educational problems, social problems, financial problems, and so on are minutely observed and drafted in the form of stories. As the reader goes through the stories, the reader realizes the real meaning of life. These are small experiences in her life like everyone gets in life but the creative mind of the author captured and drafted for the self-help improvement of people.

All problems are discussed very politely through the small stories under a title *The Old Man And His God* by Sudha Murthy; it may be of a small problem of a family or a sensitive issue of two countries. But the ideology, morality, ethics, ethos and values are completely mixed in all the stories. The author has many experiences in her life. When she was a child, she quoted many examples about her life. She minutely observed the struggle, suffer, financial problems and so on but whatever she discussed, discussed about the female problems. In her maximum stories the women are the central characters and the strugglers. But she prorated a woman in a manner that she overcame on every trouble with her self-esteem and self-strive.

Conclusion:

The author enlightened on many things, she minutely observed that the problems of a small village. She focused on honesty of the blind old couple who lives in the Lord Shiva Temple. She defined the real meaning of marriage; the commitment and partnership, and to be with each one in everything. She remarked on a civilized society, how freedom of speech is for slummiest and complete ban for a civilized and a literate lady. The Padma Shri recipient, the author prorated the relationship of two brothers and a master and servant. She gave a fine message that the people who work in private sector, they can't choose their boss but a good natured can make a good team around him. The ideology of family relationship, the values of religious philosophy, the morality of life experiences and the ethical behavior of a financial struggler is beautifully painted through all the stories.

The title story is about an old blind man in a little Shiva Temple, where the author takes shelter accidentally in the midst of storm that refuses to take any help saying that he is content with what he has. In other story she talks about a little stone bench under a banyan tree in a village in Karnataka

which gives everyone an opportunity to put down their burdens and rests and helps people regain their strength. There is another story of an old lady in a village in Karnataka, out of her sense of responsibility towards the community, she came forward to build toilets for the women and how other women exploit the atmosphere. The crisis of brothers and relationship between a master and servant's son is beautifully painted and shown how the biological brothers became strangers while sons of the master and servant became brothers. There is another story that tells how a journey and time can change a communist into a socialist and capitalist.

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