

Dynamics and Impact of Money on Family Relations in Sudha Murthy's *Dollar Bahu* and *House of Cards*

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Abstract-In every aspect of a man's life, money plays a crucial role. In fact, we can say that even a day cannot be spent without it. Without a doubt, one must endure numerous hardships to earn it. Many people devote their entire lives to its acquisition. Even when they are young, they are unable to comprehend that life is fleeting and that they must enjoy it with their family. They might develop diseases as they get older, and they might be unable to leave their home. The topic of this paper is family dynamics and how money affects family relationships in Sudha Murthy's novels. The lives of city technocrats who succumb to status and consumerism are depicted in Sudha Murthy's novels. Because life is like a battle, they fail to live it to its fullest. Additionally, her female protagonists are exceptionally intelligent, tenacious, and determined. They are not the stereotypical, helpless Indian women that are frequently depicted in media or literature. Fragments from one's own family during a time when wealth and power prevail. In her novel, innovative Indian author Sudha Murthy relates *Dollar Bahu* and *House of Cards* with gentleness, focusing on practical issues that women face in contemporary society. She talks about relationships between men and women and how a partner's ambition can hurt a well-managed relationship. In order to comprehend her freedom as an independent woman, this paper examines the knowledgeable woman's role as a wife in a love marriage, her submissive life as she struggles with loneliness and becomes submissive to her husband's egotistical tendencies. The loss he suffered and the values he lost are thoroughly examined in this paper. It also examines how his ego caused him to lose his family as a result of his wealth accumulation.

Keywords: Relationship, Money, Character, Family, Sudha Murthy

INTRODUCTION

Sudha Murthy's writing is straightforward and clear in its presentation of her ideas. She is a prolific English and Kannada author whose novels focus on the people and villages of Karnataka. She encourages feminism

and empowers her female students to overcome life's challenges. She demands that the women honor them and unleash their incredible capacity for making decisions. She gives her wealth to the less fortunate and displays a great deal of modesty and humility. She acknowledges the need and cries of the poor, the destitute, and the excluded members of society. She writes against the backdrop of English literature from India. Indian English writing in general and fiction in particular experienced a creative boom in the last quarter of the 20th century. Not only have the writings of recent Indian authors like Anita Desai, Ruth Praver Jahabwala, Mahashweta Devi Shashi Deshpande, Narayan Sahgal, Shobhaa De, Eunice De Souza, Jhumpa Lahiri, Arundhati Roy, and Sudha Murthy piqued the interest of readers all over the world, but they have also prompted us to reevaluate important issues. They were accustomed to our Indian conventions' sense of balance and anticipate more in the near future. She gives a happy ending to her novels and provides assistance to the less fortunate in her writings. She acts on JRD Tata's advice and gives back to the community what she received in return. Ninety-two of Sudha Murthy's books are available in nearly every Indian language.

Dollar Bahu, *House of Cards*, *The Bird with Golden Wings*, and *Wise and Other* are among her works. *A Salute to Life*, *The Old Man and His God*, *The Day I Quit Drinking Milk*, *A Wedding in Russia*, *The Accolades Galore*, *Changing India*, *Sweet Hospitality*, and *Gently Falls the Bakula*, principally through the penguin are some of the other films.

Her female characters are abrasive, educated, respectable, middle- to lower-class people who are overwhelmed by the modernity disagreements that have entered their lives. They are also concerned with principles, money, success, and how they affect their marriages and social relationships. Her books are

interesting; They are understandable, one-of-a-kind, and inspire readers spiritually to strive for excellence and adjust their mental outlook.

ROLE OF MONEY ON RELATIONSHIP: VINUTA, GIRISH, AND GOURAMMA

In the context of India, when a woman marries, she not only weds the person, but also the entire family, which includes multiple relationships like mother-in-law, father-in-law, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, and so on. Sudha Murthy quietly and delicately observes everything. As a wife, mother-in-law, and sister-in-law, she examines the various roles women play.

The portrayal of a middle-class family in Jayanagar, Bangalore, in *Dollar-Bahu* is beautiful. The novel emphasizes the significance of family love, affection, and bonds over financial gain.

The first half of the story takes place in India, and it explores Vinuta's sensibility within the context of the disintegrating relationship in her household caused by her mother-in-law's blinded passion for the 'Dollar.' The story is set in two countries, and the first half takes place in India. When Vinita's mother-in-law Gouramma visits her older son Chandru in the second section of the story, it takes place in the United States. Sudha Murthy has successfully juxtaposed the stories of numerous Indian Americans living in the United States on the American stage. Gouramma grows inwardly as she interacts with each character and comes to realize that family ties are worth more than 'Dollar.' Vinuta marries a bank clerk named Girish and begins living in Bangalore with his family. This is a story about how money changes how people look at each other and can almost break up families. She manages to get along well with her new family by taking care of her husband, father-in-law, and mother-in-law, Gouramma, and she doesn't take her mother-in-law's constant pickings too seriously. However, when Girish's older brother Chandru, who is currently residing in the United States, makes the decision to get married, Vinuta is forced to endure the constant comparisons that are made between her and Chandru's wife, the *Dollar Bahu*, whose husband earns the valuable dollars that have contributed to the family's recent wealth. Vinuta slowly loses her health and peace of mind. Gouramma then decides to go to her son and daughter-in-law in the United States. She experiences how liberating it can be to live away from

the rigid norms that govern Indian middle-class life once she gets there. However, she also begins to realize that the love and respect she receives back in India cannot be purchased with money alone.

For her philanthropic efforts and literary acquisition, Sudha Murthy, a disciplined writer and technocrat with the most innovative and skillful mind, has received numerous awards. Her writing is honest, has a wonderful tone, touches the readers' hearts, and makes it very enjoyable to focus on the text.

When we look at the main characters in the novel, the idea of money moves in different directions. Money for Mridula, Ratnamma, Lekshmi, Bheemanna, and Sanjay each have a life-giving, life-saving, and occasionally life-destroying quality. Sudha Murthy did an excellent job of expressing the patriarchal and financial issues. Today, there are a lot of disputes, murders, divorces, and complications that are not going away. As a result of increased education, people are more aware of these circumstances. However, the issues remain unchanged. The complicated realities have not changed. The consciousness of individuals does not change. Their perspective on these issues has changed, but it has not improved. Virginia Woolf once stated that women need to be financially independent if they want to be someone in their lives or accomplish something. However, she is successful in addition to other factors. Taking Ratnamma as an example, money occupies a distinct position in her life.

IMPACT OF MONEY AND RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MRIDULA AND SANJAY

The focus of *House of Cards* is on the family, its relationships, and the necessary equilibrium required to maintain their health. This paper focuses on Sanjay's breach of trust and the shaky foundation of Mridula and Sanjay's marriage. Because of its distinctive theme and portrayal, *House of Cards* is a novel that stands out from the group. People don't think about how materialism might affect their relationships in a world where it gets more attention. It is not just about Mridula and Sanjay's lives, but also about the lives of numerous other innocent and tainted "so-called" intellectuals. The protagonist, Mridula, was given the best name when she was born by her father, Bheemanna, because it happens very rarely. Mridula's mother, Rukuma Bai, told people that she had inherited her genes from her side of the family. She

was a bright student. She was never dissatisfied with her pre-marriage circumstances. She didn't care about anything, and she was a free bird without any bonds. She also scored a rank and was a bright student. She was advised by her teachers to major in engineering or medicine. Bheemanna was different from other parents. Additionally, this distinction demonstrates that freedom begins at home. Money is a useful instrument. Similar to a knife, it can either be used to cut an apple or kill someone. You are the one who decides how to use it. Narasinga Rao, her husband, was an expert physician. However, he resisted asking for money. He became a poor man as a result of his false beliefs. Ratnamma was always worried about how she would run the household and take care of her children. She made a firm decision to take care of the family, so she decided to take care of the fields and started her own business.

Additionally, Mridula provided him with comprehensive support for private practice. She was against wasting too much money, and all she wanted was for her husband to be happy. They both took out a loan, and she was always working hard and long hours to pay it back. She did not use an auto-rickshaw to travel or spend money on blouses that matched her saris. She didn't spend any money because she wanted a happy and secure financial future. She was deceived by Lakshmi into thinking that she wasn't perfectly dressed. She was working not for her happiness but to meet the demands of her materialistic lifestyle, and she was also getting ready to pay her family's tuition in the evenings as a form of financial repentance. In order to establish the nursing home, she lent her jewelry money. She had also paid off their home loan, but they had stayed in their apartment to save money. He started receiving a lot of money as a result of the nursing home's success. She didn't want to spend money on a new house because she thought her son Sishir would need money for school. She was instructed by Sanjay to manage his bank accounts and maintain control.

"I have a lot of work to do. I receive supplies from Mysore each week, and I must keep accurate records. This requires time. Additionally, there is a lot of competition among shops these days. I will lose customers even if I shut down my store for a day. It has also become challenging to get workers to assist in the field. I have also begun the chit's business at this point. Every month, a meeting is held. Tomorrow is

the meeting of this month at my house." (*The House of Cards*.70).

He added twenty-five thousand dollars to the standard delivery. The idealism of the husband and wife was diametrically opposed. Sanjay's sister built a new house, and her husband, Shankar, took a voluntary retirement and started a new business with a partner. But the partner cheated them, and their house and business were all lost. To get out of her difficult situation, Lakshmi required thirty lakhs. RoseMary effectively managed the nursing home's financial affairs. Mridula told her mother-in-law about Lakshmi's need for thirty lakhs, but she said she didn't want to get involved. Mridula agreed to assist Lakshmi during their trying times, but when she asked her husband for his approval, he said no:

"Mridula, we lack that amount of money." I've seen how they live since living in their house for two years. They are too proud. They won't ever repay the loan, so I won't give it to them. I am willing to offer Shankar a salary-paying position at the nursing home if he consents. However, they cannot reside in our home and must remain apart. This is the only way I can assist them. That is my final decision." (*The House of Cards* 139).

After hearing her husband's decision, she felt uneasy. She did not speak. She and her husband lived in a four-bedroom house in JP Nagar, a residential neighborhood in south Bangalore. They have three automobiles. Mridula had taken over as school principal in Bangalore's Jayanagar residential neighborhood. Shishir, their son, was stubborn and spoiled by his father. The three workers were trustworthy. She did not want to quit her job because it had enabled her to launch a hospital during difficult times and provided her with oxygen. Sanjay had gained self-assurance through repeated success. Sanjay achieved success as a result of Mridula's efforts, dedication, and unwavering support. He also accepted the difficulties that life would bring. They don't have any issues because Alex and Sanjay split the profits. He had learned a lot about managing money. He did not anticipate reporting all of his earnings to the Income Tax division. He had both white and black money. Black money was used to pay all bribes. Mridula was kept in the dark about what Sanjay was up to. Mridula sees it as immoral. Anita's husband Alex, the other male character, also cheated on her, deceived her by having an affair with anyone

and had used two condoms in her own bedroom when she wasn't there. When Mridula learned of it, both Anita and her were taken aback. When men have more money, their hypocrisy and skepticism become abundantly clear, as does the dishonesty in their marital relationships. Sanjay used to always check the accounts at his nursing home, which had been upgraded to a hundred bed facilities. He doesn't trust anyone with money, not even Rosemary, her receptionist. He had increased his wealth and accelerated himself into the corrupt practices. Mridula also gave his son lessons to save money for when things got tough. Even when he was wrong, Sanjay always stood by his son. He teaches his son how to make money and also explains that most people are weak financially. Mridula was also misled by Sanjay's attitude. Because Mridula's upbringing was different from that of her husband, she argued with her husband not to teach her son the wrong things and told him that her son would go wrong.

The provocative remarks made by her husband and son caused her to become extremely agitated and sensitive. Her son Shishir never ate at home because he didn't like the food she made and his father also told him to eat outside. By teaching his son the wrong morals, Sanjay was completely spoiling him. Unlike his father, Shishir had begun to rebel against his mother. Her son had been taught by Mridula to be honest and hardworking, and he used to share these values with her. Mridula was treated with contempt by Sanjay, who admired everyone else but her. Mridula's discrimination began at home. Sanjay trusted his sister more than his wife. She believed that money had taken her joy. Sanjay was of the opinion that Mridula had to understand how Lakshmi lived his life. In front of other people, he acted polished, but in front of his wife, he seems too harsh. He finds fault with her and criticizes her. When it came to forming his opinions, he was a dictator. Mridula was unaware that the real world was full of self-centered individuals. Compassion unites people in any relationship. The pharmaceutical company urgently required documents from Sanjay's nursing home as he traveled to Malaysia for the international conference. Mridula didn't go to the nursing home except for Ayudha Puja, but she went there to look for a file. Something fell apart at that precise moment. The trusting foundation has been broken. She was afraid of drowning and had lost faith

in him. Sanjay used to say that he had been cheating on her for the past five years.

DISCUSSION

All human relationships have become complex as a result of this age's decreasing convulsion. They get more and more intricate and subtle thanks to a lot of forces in the underworld. As a result, it is the responsibility of both partners to maintain their marriage without significant mental or physical damage. If the spouses' relationships are honest and clear in their communication, this can be accomplished. Modern marriages necessitate harmony between men and women. Regardless of custom or tradition, each spouse should fulfill the roles for which they are best suited in order to accomplish this. The complexity of family life is the subject of the majority of Sudha Murty's writings. Mutual understanding is one of the important aspects of family life that plays a significant role. In point of fact, the setting of her novels is ambivalent; It is a world where harmony is sought but rarely achieved, and the desire to withdraw vs. the longing to live life to its fullest with the appropriate fervor and love. In the world of drudgery and routine, instinct, emotion, and passion appear to be foreign concepts. In her fictional works, Sudha Murty describes dysfunctional and unhappy familial relationships. The majority of the main characters in her books are almost servile. They cannot reconcile their individual values with familial ties, which they find to be scratchy and cause them constant upheaval. In Sudha Murty's novels, the social fabric and traditional setting in which the female protagonists live are significant factors. They are not only destitute as a result of these social, cultural, traditional, and domestic conditions, but they also experience increased mental agony and lose their psychic equilibrium. Due to the numerous social, political, and cultural issues that dominated the environment, the early Indian English novelists barely touched on the study of family relationships. An accomplished novelist by the name of Sudha Murty has established herself as a writer with profound insight into the female psyche. She aims to expose the family tradition of teaching women to play a submissive role by focusing on marital relationships. Each partner must take care of the other because domestic harmony is a delicate issue. It requires equal amounts of love,

sacrifice, and stress from both partners. The family structure hopes to remain stable if these qualities exist; However, Indian society's family structure enjoys the privilege of unity even without this because of the patience and perseverance of Indian women.

CONCLUSION

The novels *Dollar Bahu* and *House of Cards* by Sudha Murthy depicts men's whimsical and hypocritical chauvinistic attitudes with bare-faced reality. The protagonists of these novels have fragile marriages that are easily torn apart by their cheating tyrant husbands. Beings are not pure in heart; some are liars and some are selfish. Mridula loved him completely, no matter what, and she walked with him on the difficult road to success. However, her husband Sanjay was a noxious intruder who had emotionally harmed her. Sanjay had never truly connected with Mridula. He was in charge, had a big ego due to his success, and he never had a good conversation with her, which demonstrates her destructive infidelity. On the other hand, she had personally supported him throughout the life tour de force. Cheating the wife out of money is evidence of emotional infidelity. He was, without a doubt, smart, had kept his secret well, and felt vulnerable to the selfishness of his mother and sister. She believed that it was preferable to be alone and content than to be with someone who made her feel inferior, undesirable, and not good enough due to his dubious attitude. Sanjay opened a joint account with his sister Lakshmi and gave money to his mother and a car to his nephew Anil without telling his wife. Mridula was puzzled that she had not received a good reward of saving for the future because he had cheated and dominated her as a result of his dubious nature as he had increased his success with the assistance of his wife. He realized his error afterward, became enraged, and with a glimmer of hope of bringing her back, ran after her. Mridula struggled emotionally and rationally. It happened because their upbringings, genes, and the environment in which they had grown up were different. She was forced to suffer at the hands of her husband because of the ingrained values, diverse cultures, and differing economic status of their families. People would become more self-centered with more money, resulting in destructive harm and intimate partner infidelity. A marriage is destroyed by heartless judgment, manipulation, and power, and the

house that was built lightly collapses horribly. The paper argues that women should be granted equal rights and that patriarchy or their husbands should not control, subjugate, or cheat them. They ought to enjoy the same rights as their husbands. Females must also become more aware and avoid being taken in by others. It's better to be upfront with your partner or spouse about your financial situation. One must not violate their partner's trust; If trust is broken, you will never be able to live together again. The card-constructed house is simple to demolish. Marriage, a socially sacred institution, has lost its holiness and relevance in the novel due to Sanjay's dubious behavior. In this hypocritical world, where there is gender discrimination and subordinate consideration of women in pecuniary phenomena of life, Sudha Murthy has undoubtedly written about the real experiences of her life and exposed female characters to manifest their pain, yearnings, and sufferings. Additionally, she has juxtaposed the pretentiousness, insensibility, and greediness of the patriarchal world through this novel.

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