



**THE INSTRUMENTAL ROLE OF LITERATURE IN IMPARTING
VALUE EDUCATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A CONTEXTUAL
STUDY OF SELECTED NARRATIVES FROM *THE DAY I STOPPED
DRINKING MILK***

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ABSTRACT:

*The universities and institutions play a vital role in inculcation of human values in younger generation as it results a promise and hope for better society. Therefore, it becomes essential to induce value education in higher education pedagogy and literature plays an instrumental role in inculcating values in students. Education doesn't mean only professional knowledge of the course undertaken, but the major role of education is to instill social, moral and ethical values. The present paper tries to recognize the role of literature in imparting value education in higher education pedagogy with context to Sudha Murty's selected short stories from her recent book *The Day I Stopped Drinking Milk* published in 2012 by Penguin Books India.*

Key Words: Literature, Higher Education Pedagogy, Value Education, Tolerance, Social Responsibility, Honesty, Sharing And Helping, Hard work, Compassion, Etc.

Introduction:

The universities and institutions play a vital role in inculcation of human values in younger generation as it results a promise and hope for better society. Therefore, it becomes essential to induce value education in higher education pedagogy and literature plays an instrumental role in inculcating values in students. Education doesn't mean only professional knowledge of the course undertaken, but the major role of education is to instill social, moral and ethical values. The present paper tries to recognize the role of literature in imparting value education in higher education pedagogy with context to Sudha Murty's selected short stories from her recent book *The Day I Stopped Drinking Milk* published in 2012 by Penguin Books India.

Sudha Murty is an Indian bilingual author, who has more than twenty books in English and more than 150 titles in total to her credit as an author as many of her books are translated in most Indian regional languages such as Marathi, Gujrathi, Urdu, Dogri, Tamil, etc. and the foreign languages such as Italian, etc. Her first English book *Wise and Otherwise* translated in Sanskrit- one of the oldest languages in the world today. Her language is simple, lucid and direct which touches readers' heart and appeals them to a great extent.

The present book under study *The day I Stopped Drinking Milk* is a collection of narratives of Murty's mind and changed her life's perspectives. There are many narratives which could play an instrumental role in value education in higher education.

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Education plays an important role as it helps value generation as it creates positive atmosphere amongst the learners and without positive values sustainable development is impossible. The present paper attempts to understand the instrumental role in implanting value education in higher education. In India, mainly the value education is mainly imparted at primary and secondary levels and in higher education value education is subsided due to its main focus on the specialization of subjects under study.

The vast development in communication technology and information technology has an increased impact on the minds of the students and impact of materialism and consumerism lead to rethink over the need of value education in higher education. India being a pluralistic society needs to integrate the value of religious tolerance. The other values the youth need to integrate are discipline, self-control, honesty, helping and sharing, hard-work, etc. many of these values are highlighted in Murty's most of the writings. The book under study also contains many of these values and could be used as an instrument of value education.

India is a home to almost all the world religions viz. Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism, Christianity, Islamism and Zoroastrianism, etc. the significant feature of Indianness is religious tolerance and non-violence. However, the religious tolerance tension exists as there are many incidents of religious intolerance. Murty's narrative "Rehman's Avva" is a perfect example of religious tolerance and harmonious coexistence. Once Murty visits Rehman and to her surprise she finds his mother and sister belong to different faith, she feels confused and Rehman explains,

"Ma'am, you must be wondering why my mother and sister are Hindus while I am a Muslim. Only you can understand and appreciate my life story because I have seen you helping people from all religions and communities without bias. I remember your comment to me: we can't choose the community or religion that we are born into---so we should never think that our community is our identity." (Murty, 18)

Rehman was an orphan and kashibai and Datturam brought him up along with their daughter Usha as their own son though his religion was different from theirs. Kashibai and Datturam were keen about Rehman's upbringing with his religion, so he was sent for namaaz on every Friday and was sent to recite Koran in a mosque nearby. He was also sent to the neighbourhood Muslims to celebrate Muslim festivals and he also celebrated Hindu festivals at home with his new family. Murty was overwhelmed by Kashibai and Datturam's humanity, she affirms,

"I was amazed at Kashibai. She was uneducated but far advanced in human values. I was surprised and humbled by the largeness of her heart. Kashibai had raised the boy with his own religion and still loved him like her son" (Murty, 25)

Thus Murty's narrative is a good example of 'Religious Tolerance and Harmonious Coexistence' which is a need of the hour. 'Social Responsibility' is an entity that an individual is obliged to perform for the betterment of the society and contribute in the benefit of the society at large. In fact, it is a duty of each individual to contribute in the sustainable development and social welfare. Many of Murty's narratives are directed towards



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individual's duties towards the betterment of the society and even a small contribution could make a big difference.

Ganga's Ghat is a narrative of a middle aged woman who lived in a thatched hut near the rocks; she never locked her hut because there was nothing to steal from it'. She, despite her poverty, provided hot water for bathing to the poor beggars. It was a great task as her village had no water at all and she has to struggle to get water. Murty describes it in exact words:

"Water was a big problem because of the rocks around the area. The government has dug borewells, and water was stored in a tank. Everybody had to walk half a kilometer to fetch water from the tank. However, in summer, it was very hard to get water because there was no electricity and muddy road would get very hot. Hence, summer was a curse to the people in the village." (Murty, 26-27)

In such a hard situation, she started a service to provide water for the beggars to have a bath which helped them to cure their skin diseases. Murty acknowledges,

"I was reminded of the river Ganga. The river flows from the Himalayas and we believe that, if we take a dip in her; it will wash away all our sins and diseases. Hence, the bathing ghats at Varanasi, Hardwar and Rishikesh are famous. I felt peaceful and thought that this Ganga's bathing ghat was no less than the bathing ghats of the river Ganga." (Murty, 33)

It seems Murty acknowledges a simple deed of Ganga helping the poor by providing bathing facilities with greatest admiration by comparing her to the river Ganga. The narrative effectively reinstates the significance of social responsibility, however in a small way.

Helping the Dead is a narrative which also underlines one's responsibility towards society. Murty writes about Vinayak, a young boy, a college dropout from a poor background. He never got a decent job though he spent most of his time in helping others.

"He babysat children, brought medicines for old people, got groceries for somebody and fetched water for the house among other things." (Murty, 58)

He was called as a *real paropkari* by his favourite Tunga bai. The news of Tunga bai's death disturbs Vinayak and he decided to contribute his share of money of Ganesh festival towards the expenses of Tunga bai's cremation as he knew the precarious financial position of her son, Sakharam- hart patient. And as it was the month end none from the chawl could contribute towards the cremation expenses. His friends were in a festive mood of celebration and they were very disappointed at Vinayak's decision. After some argument his parents supported him. Later he decided to contribute remaining money towards this cause.

"There must be many people in this city who are very poor and have nobody to help them cremate or bury their dead ones. They could be from any community. Why can't we help some of them? We can donate the remaining money towards that purpose. We won't get into the religious part of the cremation. That is left to the family. I am aware that we may be able to help only a few people, but it is better to send towards a needy cause than to waste the money having beer. Don't you think that we should help

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people, particularly at such a time when they can't ever think straight because their mind is preoccupied with thoughts of losing the loved one?" (Murty, 64-65)

Thus with a single thought made a positive difference in thousands of lives. Though they received donations for the cause, they never touched the money for personal use, in fact, everyone started working for livelihood and voluntarily contributed towards the cause with full devotion. Without any personal goals the Mukti Sainik selflessly worked towards the most unpopular job of cremating the old, the poor and helpless. They found a graceful way of helping the dead.

Conclusion:

The above selected narratives and many others by Murty could be instrumental in inspiring the youth and inculcation values of Social Responsibility, Honesty and Tolerance in youth through higher education. The universities and institutions play a vital role in inculcation of human values in younger generation as it results a promise and hope for better society. Therefore, it becomes essential to induce value education in higher education pedagogy and literature plays an instrumental role in inculcating values in students.

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