



Indoctrination of Young Minds Through Virtuous Sagas by Sudha Murthy in *Grandma's Bag of Stories*

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The present paper aims to highlight several virtuous characteristics of Indian culture and the amazing bond among the family members, especially the connection between Grand-parents and Grandchildren. Through the scrutinized study, the paper displays certain deep rooted Indian values woven in stories which mostly pass from one generation to another. In this way, *Grandma's Bag of Stories* gives a clear picture about the numerous ethical traits of India which impart just or moral lessons to the coming generation. Educating children through interesting stories helps them to be a responsible inhabitant of the world. The present paper analyses following points: Fictional and light hearted methods of inducing morals in the kids, importance of education, hard work, honesty, accountability, conscious focus on our work/karma as well as not to follow laziness, egoism/boast, ignorance, irresponsible approach. *Grandma's Bag of Stories* teaches kids the proper means to follow with a view to making a disciplined life.

A prolific writer in English and Kannada, Sudha Murthy(born in 1950) has written travelogues, technical books, novels, collections of short stories and non-fictional pieces, and many children books. She received R.K. Narayan Award for Literature and Padma shri in 2006. Her books are translated into many languages. *Grandma's Bag of Stories* was first published in 2012. It is a collection of around twenty-one stories.

Before Sudha Murthy takes the readers into the world of her stories, she narrates the story from the beginning of the stories. The interesting titles of the tales make the readers engaged from the beginning to the end. In all these short-narratives the readers find a strong bond between two extreme generations. The storyteller uses characters' names Ajja (grandpa) and Ajji (grandma) - thus showing *Kannada* culture. The kids are Raghu, Meenu, Anand, Krishna. Ajji's daughter Sumati and daughter-in-law Subhadra and some kids from the neighborhood are also a part of the narrative. Most of them live in the city and visit their grandparents during vacation time. The love among cousins, grandparents, friends and neighbors reflect the peaceful and caring setting of rural life which must be exposed to urban people in today's era.

Doctor, Doctor -this story was told by Ajji on the very first day of the kid's stay in the village during their vacation. Ajji informed all the children about her knowledge regarding stories and asked all of them to say something on their ambition. One by one each sibling expresses his/her goals. Now comes the main point to dictate young minds a life lesson- the significance of some goal in one's life at the same time to be helpful to people. Through the story of Ravi and magic pitcher Ajji very easily convinces her grandchildren not to be greedy in life as well as believe in science rather than magical short-cuts. *Kavery and the Thief* displays the wittiness of a hard working poor farmer woman who becomes rich due to her sharp wit. Like the story of Akbar and Birbal, *Who was the happiest of them all* brings a fascinating account of King Amrit and his Minister Chandan. Like kings do need clever ministers in their kingdom to show them the correct



path to lead the state smoothly, every one also needs someone like parents, grandparents, teachers or even best friends to change his/her ways when needed. By portraying the character of Siddharth- the virtue of honesty is eulogized in the story *The Enchanted Scorpio*. The story has some magical and supernatural elements which makes the tale amusing. *The Horse Trap* is the account of an English scholar Geroge Smith. Meenu's mathematical calculation for needed pappadam for people to arrive reminds Aji of a great thinker. This tale incorporates information of the founders of Steam Engine, cars and airplanes!

One should be careful about one's expenditure-*Lakshmi- the goddess*. This message is passed through an amusing exposition of the tale which happened in Heaven. By narrating the tendency of Ramu and Rani on spending money recklessly in *A Treasure for Ramu*, Aji gave the lesson of the value of money and its careful use. *Donkey and the Stick* disillusiones the superstitions of innocent villagers who were befooled by a lazy disciple of one wise sage.

Some people are very calculative and utilitarian. They want rewards for even trivial tasks done by them. Aji asks Anand once for some work but Anand demands some rewards for that and Aji conveys the message of- **The joy of helping others itself is a reward(pg-64)** through the funny story of Mushika-*What's there in it for me?*

The Princess's New Clothes- the tale is originated in a market place where Krishna does not like any dresses for her. Every year Aji and Ajja spend some amount of money to purchase dresses for their grandkids as a token of love. Here through the character of Beena and her craze for new attires, the young hearts learn not to fuss over clothes.

The value of love, unity and loyalty is conveyed in a mythical way in *The Story of Paan*. Importance of Promise- this moral is described though *Payasam of Bear*. This is perhaps one of the funniest stories in this collection. *Fire on the Bread* is a funny account of a lazy man who finally learns the importance of hard work. In the next tale *Five Spoons of Salt* Gita is portrayed as a forgetful girl. In a humorous style, with the pleasing incident of complications in adding salt in Sambhar, Gita learns the lesson to be a responsible and careful girl. *The story of seasons* has a mythical touch to amuse children about the origin of seasons on the earth.

The Island of Statue throws light on the awareness of conservation in our environment. Through a fictitious narrative of a great kind-hearted king and his kingdom's sculptor Amar-Rehmat Chacha conveys a message of valuing the invaluable nature. *The Kingdom of Fools* is also told by Rehmant Chacha where one king is proud of his wisdom and boasts of the citizens in his state. His old master decides to teach him a lesson so he asks his three clever disciples to teach him the correct mode of conduct. His three students- Harish, Mahesh, Umesh in a very light hearted method rectify the boastful attitude of the king.

The life of a village is pretty different from a city. All people are together in the wedding of their near and dear ones. They participate in all the activities and rituals of the wedding. Sudha Murthy informs the rural life to the readers in the following lines:

Here, it was not like the city where you went at a certain time printed on the card, gave your present, ate and came back. In a village everyone is invited, whether your name was on a card or not. And not only where you expected to pitch in and help the host! pg 156 (Murthy)



The Story of a Silk is exposed to the audience in the above style which takes us into the world of ancient China and the birth of Silk cloth. In the tale one comes to know the origin of the China Silk and some interesting traits of the cloth type. The next story elucidates that life is very short and momentarily -one should never forget that one will die someday through the narrative of a Merchant called Arun and Yama. Once Aji is asked about her wrinkles on her face and skin by her grandchildren and she answers the kids in a fictional method. Moreover her reply is charmed by the arrival of Yama- the god of death. In addition to this, Arun's involvement in the material world is revealed. Like Arun, most of the people live on this planet as if they will be on the earth permanently. At last when Arun looks back on his days and realizes that even without meaning to, he was actually preparing for death.

The Unending Story is the last story which is told by Aji on the last day of the kids' stay with their grandparents. It is an interesting tale of a fifteen year old king who is obsessed with listening to stories. He listens to ten stories every day and later on his minister teaches him an impeccable lesson by informing him not to engage his life in his hobbies. One must take responsibility for his work. Hence, children also understand the significance of other responsible things and to fix one time to entertain themselves in their area of interests.

Educating kids and true methods of learning have been discussed by great scholars since time immemorial. Like Murthy, Manubhai Pancholi imparts his view in his Gujarati speech at Jamnagar by mentioning that children are the treasure house. The teacher who realizes their innate expertise is the real educator. One of the methods to enrich this treasure of children is to inculcate virtuous sagas to them from the very beginning of their life. This technique will guide them to be a wonderful citizen of the world.

Works Cited

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