

Sudha Murty's 'Three Thousand Stitches': A Chronicle of Social Reformatations

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Abstract—A chairperson of Infosys, member of public health care initiatives of the Gates Foundation, a philanthropist who has been honored by Padamshri Award is **Mrs SudhaMurty**. 'Three thousand stitches' was published in 2017, this book consists of eleven stories. Her personal experiences and her works are woven in these stories. Devdasi culture existed sometime in the 7th c, in the reigns of Cholas's and Pandas. Those so called devdasi were ignorant of their future, they were left out with the acceptance of their sufferings and their belief in their Goddess, but their ignorant firm belief that Goddess will protect them became true with the entrance of SudhaMurty into their world. SudhaMurty in this brief autobiography is concerned only with those incidents and experiences in her life that has helped to develop her personality, and a thought process. A strategy was made long before in her mind and implemented later in life.

Keywords— chairperson, culture, ignorant, autobiography, implemented.

A chairperson of Infosys, member of public health care initiatives of the Gates Foundation, a philanthropist who has been honored by Padamshri Award is **Mrs Sudha Murty**. A powerful signature in India known for her hard work and dedication and her concern for the social reforms. Her work of social reforms includes almost all the fields i.e. health care, emancipation of women, public hygiene, poverty, art and culture, rural development in association with Karnatak Government etc. She has significantly contributed to the literature of Kannada and English. Her novel 'Dollar Bahu' was adapted as a television series by Zee T.V. in 2001. She was invited on 'Kaun Banega Cropati Show' Season 11 in its Karmveer Episode. 'Three thousand stitches' was published in 2017; this book consists of eleven stories. Her personal experiences and her works are woven in these stories. Several incidents in her life had laid deep impact on her mind, has framed her mind as such that it became a source of inspiration and motivation in later years. Her struggles are obvious and noted by people who know her, and all the stories have an honest confession of her thoughts and their transformation into a positive outcome.

Three thousand stitches is the title story of this collection written by a social worker for the betterment of the neglected woman of devdasi culture. Devdasi culture existed in sometime in the 7th c in the reigns of Cholas's and Pandas. A respected culture was held high status in society, but in modern days it is thrown into prostitution.

Those so called devdasi were ignorant of their future they were left out with the acceptance of their sufferings and their belief in their Goddess, but their ignorant firm belief that Goddess will protect them became true with the entrance of SudhaMurty into their world, and thought of for their reformation. She was Goddess for devdasi but in reality a woman who had struggled hard to make them realize their value as a human being. Initially Devdasi rejected her, they didn't listen to her as, "—they all suffered at the hands of a society that exploited them and filled them with guilt and shame as a final insult. (p. 14). Later when she changed her appearance and became an Indian woman, "I wore a two-hundred-rupee sari, a big bindi, a mangalsutra and glass bangles. I transformed myself into the 'bharatiyanari', the stereotypical, traditional Indian woman, and took my father along with me to meet the devadasis. (p. 13), they accepted her listened to her and followed her. An autobiographical note written in First person narration is so powerfully written that makes hearts move. In this story the helplessness of the author is beautifully narrated when those devdasis rejected her presence, also her cry and her constant effort, ultimately her victory, with an old devdasi's oration and the precious gift they gave to her. This experience has definitely shown the path to many people around who can't raise a huge empire of refuge for sufferers but at least can become a helping hand. The title of the story is justified in last few lines by old devdasi, said, 'We want to give our akka a special gift. It is an embroidered embroidered

bedspread and each of us has stitched some portion of it. So there are three thousand stitches.” (p. 19). A linear presentation with a single theme of reformation of neglected class, efforts made by a single woman who has lost the battle initially becomes winner with the support of her father and her co-worker Abhay. Her change over into sari gives a message how Indian culture is accepted and deep rooted even today of which every Indian is proud of. Indianess is emphasized by the use of hindi and kannadawords “They called me akka or ‘elder sister’ in Kannada. the ‘bharatiyanari’, ‘Namaskaram, Amma. Kalash , bhandara ‘man—bahujanhitaya, bahunjansukhaya—it must provide compassionate aid regardless of caste, creed, language or religion. (p. 8), as if she wants to make it and be sure that she is Indian irrespective of the English language, she has chosen for narrating her success of reforming devdasis.

“How to beat Boys” Second story in the collection is titled “How to beat Boys” deals with the Theme of feminism, rather re-enforced experience that says nothing is impossible, for any woman can Beat the Boys. Emphasis is laid on woman education with the message when she can do why not others to make a community of a successful woman.

She doesn’t hesitate instead is confident and proud for being a student of “I smiled. “I’m talking about the BasappaVeerappaBhoomaraddi College of Engineering and Technology in Hubli, a medium-sized town in the state of Karnataka in India. Murty, Sudha. Three Thousand Stitches.” (p. 20). A touch of humour or rather a proud humour by giving details of importance of studying at a small place engineering college and emphasizing the importance of Family being a core of ‘Indian culture’

Her fight against male dominance started with her admission in engineering college but eventually ended with the importance of family as like all Indian woman does, ‘acceptance with awareness. The restriction imposed on her before her admission to engineering college were “.....ask her to wear a sari to college as it is a man’s world out there and the sari will be an appropriate dress for the environment she will be in.” (p. 23). Later she proved herself better than boys “I found that I performed better than the boys, (p. 28). Finally, it was the lack of ladies’ toilets on campus that made me understand the difficulty faced by many women in India. (p. 23). Her observance and experience was not a forgotten past as when she became capable of, “Eventually, this would lead me to build more than 13,000 toilets in Karnataka alone!” (p. 23). Importance of religious rituals was also observed and done by her mother “Meanwhile, my mother chose an auspicious day for me to pay the tuition fee. It was a Thursday” (p. 23). “

touched the feet of all the elders at home and prayed to Goddess Saraswati (p. 24). Along with she has read Hindu scriptures Sacred Bhagwad Gita, she has quoted a few quotes associating them to her experience in life. Bhagavad Gita where Krishna says, ‘Atmaaiva hi atmanobandhuaatmaaivaripuatmanah’. (p. 24). In this brief Autobiography, Murty’s college days experiences are beautifully narrated in the First person Narration, It is an inspiration to the young girls of today. Her struggle in male dominated society has made her a strong woman. She got remarks from boys, for her it must have been painful then, today she proudly quotes their ‘foolishness’ by answering them, becoming a successful woman in the world of Man.

Food for Thought is an interesting experience of the author that gives an insight into mystical importance of nature with the religions and culture, mythology, Trishanku state of man and myth associated with it. As “Vishwamitra created a new world for Trishanku and called it Trishanku Swarga. He even created vegetables that belonged neither to the earth nor heaven. (p. 36). Story of the origin of banana fruit and the power of sage to create a fruit and the myths related to it is mentioned through the story of sage Durvasa, “farm—one was a chilli called Gandhar or Ravana chilli” (pp. 35-36) Importance of modern technology is also narrated as well “Today, Google is like my grandmother. I log on to the website any time I require an explanation of something I don’t understand or want to learn about.” Discussing dishes from Mysore state also mention the etymology of the dessert “Gulab Jamun in Moghals reign Kashmiri Kheer, discussion on dishes of Maharashtra, Her visit to her friend house gathers interesting information that gives the impression of National Integration. It’s simply an informative experience with no particular theme to emphasize.

Three Hand Fulls of Water this story shows the importance of Hindu rituals that cannot be ruled out, a story narrating the importance of Kashi and river Ganges with author’s experiences and her conversations with her grandmother and the way she taught her the importance of these religious places. “Kashi is one of the most sacred places on earth. The river Ganga flows there. It is believed that Lord Vishwanath, the Lord of the universe, resides there and gives boons to everyone. (p. 43). “Kashi is protected by Bhairavnath, who is a great and loyal servant of Lord Shiva. If you go to Kashi and don’t see the Kaal Bhairav temple, your yatra or journey is considered incomplete. (p. 43-44). And beliefs associated with it is told. Author has much read and heard about Kashi and its religious importance about the sacredness of this place, she has also read Buddhism and its philosophy. “.....I started reading extensively and became completely fascinated with

Buddhism.”(p 45) Because of her inquisitive nature she tried to find the traces to connect Buddha with Kashi through her own interpretations. Later years after she herself visited Kashi testing its importance on the belief of her Grandparents and ultimately surrendered to their beliefs By releasing Ganga water back into river. This story is more a travelogue finding the facts of beliefs.

Cattle Class is an experience deals with a moral and social conduct. A small incident written on the deceptive appearance and boastfulness. One shouldn't judge people on the grounds of money and pompous appearance others may have a grounded personality with little show off. Moral teachings, a lesson for the so called sophisticated class that money is not everything.

A Life unwritten is A heartfelt experience of Murty's father performing his duties as a doctor with a generous heart. It is about a woman's struggle and how a kind hearted Mentor can change one's life. A woman who wanted to die as she has suffered in the hands of a man and so her daughter will also have to suffer 'Oh my God! It's a girl!' she cried. 'Her life will be just like mine—under the cruel pressure of the men in the family. And she doesn't even have a father!'(p. 62). Fate of a woman and here a Doctor's help became life changer. Also throws light on Sudha Murty's moral education along with academic, to fight back till one becomes a winner. She too became a mentor and helped many people, innumerable, particularly woman.

No Place Like Home is author's kind heartedness and sacrifice, Murty meets some woman who had been taken to middle east as maids. And their tortures and helplessness has touched her so much that without wasting time she arranged one way fare for these tortured women to bring them back to India, keeping aside a construction of her new office.

A Powerful Ambassador is about Sudha Murty's interest in films and her keen and observing nature has perhaps taught her and given her a training to become a writer of class. Extensive traveling all over the world helped her to know the various cultures as well as importance of “Bollywood” everywhere and its deep rooted impact. She herself accepts, “Necessary prerequisites consist of a tight story, good music, crisp conversation, excellent script and dialogues, fine acting by the lead roles, appropriate costumes, outstanding direction and careful editing.” “My deep interest in films took me to the next level—assessing the acting abilities of the heroes and the skills of the director.” (p. 84).

Rasleela and the Swimming Pool a helpless Grandmother who narrates two stories of Indian mythology to her

grandchildren. She told those stories to them which her grandmother had narrated, “I thought that they would visualize the scenes just like I had.”(p. 94), ‘the same tale of Lord Krishna and the gopikas’ gopikas. Since I had their attention, I added the story of Akshaya Patra too.(p. 94). Retelling of the stories by the two grandchildren changed the whole westernized version and made the author spellbound as now it was impossible for her to explain them importance of Indian mythology and the moral lesson has no place nearby.

A Day in Infosys Foundation gives the picture of author's busy schedule where she cannot have her social life, cannot justify her social commitments in the family. She invites her childhood friend Shobha to spend some time and without spending some leisure time her friend leaves the office as Murty has to do some more work herself in the office, Her friend advise her, ‘Tell me, why do you continue to give your remaining years to this thankless job?’ she asked. ‘You can sit back, relax, spend time with your grandchildren,” (p. 112). Her friend's suggestion is rejected then and there, “The truth is that I am the luckiest of them all. I love what I do and...”(p.113).

I Can't, We Can -In a family wedding, Author's cousin wanted to introduce her to her friend's daughter, Murthy interrupts but, ‘My friend's daughter is a bright student and . . .’ ‘Is she planning to apply for a job at Infosys?’ I interrupted her. ‘Because I really can't . . .’(p. 115) This needs to be mentioned because the word in title used is ‘I can't,’ which is later converted into ‘We Can’ when she visits AA organization, and then when the girl said, ‘Ma'am, my father was an alcoholic.’ (p. 116). Social reformer herself Murthy came to know about the organizations of Alcoholics Anonymous. She attended their meetings and was impressed by their determination. Though this story directly has nothing to do in this brief autobiography of hers but definitely her appreciation for other such organization meant a lot for people who are struggling hard to come out the devil's grip.

Sudha Murty in this brief autobiography is concerned only with those incidents and experiences in her life that has helped her to develop her personality, and a thought process. A strategy was made long before in her mind and implemented later in life. What makes Sudha Murty different from the other contemporary women writers is that she's basically an engineer, an Information Technology professional. So therein lies the difference of mind set. Her language is simple first-hand experience with no ornaments used; purpose is to be understood by masses. Other women writers at large are concerned with the inner world, psychology, inner consciousness; and little emphasis is laid on social needs whereas in this particular book only

social reform, social set up is of major concern. What is common with all other woman writer is the autobiographical element in their writings, basically A WOMAN.

REFERENCES

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