



Lessons Beyond the Pages: Stories of Tradition, Diligence, and True Success in Sudha Murty's "What's Luck Got to Do with It?"

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ABSTRACT

In Sudha Murty's story "What's Luck Got to Do with It?", the protagonist Ajja, a grandfather and headmaster of a small school, follows a traditional teaching method. He uses stories to impart knowledge and life lessons to his students. Ajja explains the cultural significance of storytelling in India, highlighting how ancient texts like the Panchatantra and Lilavati utilize narratives to teach various subjects. His approach underscores the enduring power of storytelling as a tool for education and moral development. Ajja narrates the story of Ravi, a humble farmer, who finds himself embroiled in unexpected challenges when his wife urges him to impersonate an astrologer. As Ravi grapples with dilemmas involving thieves and the king's court, he learns profound truths about integrity, humility, and the essence of true success. This paper illuminates the author's perspective by analyzing her crafted narrative. Throughout the story's journey, Murty emphasizes traditional wisdom, diligence, and the importance of authenticity. By exploring Ajja's teachings and Ravi's experiences, Murty highlights the enduring power of storytelling for education and moral development. Additionally, Murty underscores the value of traditional wisdom and diligence in achieving genuine success.

Keywords- Diligence, traditional wisdom, humility, storytelling, integrity

Objective:

The objective of this paper is to explore the themes of tradition, diligence, and true success as depicted in Sudha Murty's story "What's Luck Got to Do with It?" This paper analyzes how the characters navigate challenges and learn important life lessons, highlighting the significance of integrity, humility, and staying true to oneself. Additionally, the paper examines the role of storytelling in education and moral development, as portrayed through Ajja's teaching methodology. Through a close examination of the narrative, the paper conveys the enduring value of traditional wisdom and diligence in achieving genuine success.

Methodology:

This study uses textual analysis as a methodology to explore the various themes of tradition, diligence, and true success as depicted in Sudha Murty's story "What's Luck Got to Do with It?"

The analysis focuses on key moments in the story where tradition, diligence, and true success are emphasized, examining how these themes manifest in the characters' behavior and decision-making. Through this process, the paper aims to elucidate the lessons imparted by the narrative, particularly regarding the importance of integrity, humility, and staying true to oneself amidst life's challenges. Furthermore, the methodology involves examining the role of storytelling in education and moral development, particularly through Ajja's teaching methodology. By analyzing Ajja's storytelling techniques and their impact on the characters, the paper seeks

to understand how traditional wisdom is transmitted and internalized, shaping the characters' values and worldview. Overall, this textual analysis methodology enables a nuanced exploration of the themes and messages conveyed in the story, providing insights into the enduring value of traditional wisdom and diligence in achieving genuine success.

Review of Literature:

Unlike many other critics currently exploring Sudha Murthy's writing, this study stands out. While there is considerable ongoing research on Murthy's work, only a few delve into her fiction and non-fiction.

In the paper titled, "Portrayal of Indian Values in select works of Sudha Murthy" the author writes,

Sudha Murthy's works helps us to strengthen human values so that we as human beings who are described to be the top of God's creation are able to establish our worth over lesser living beings by setting refined goals and achieving them through the right means...Each narration of Sudha Murthy is akin to precious gems, which impart the light of wisdom and values. (Hashmi)

In a research article titled, "Real-Life Anecdotes in Sudha Murthy's Wise and Otherwise: A Salute to Life and How I Taught My Grandmother to Read and Other Stories", the authors write,

Author Sudha Murthy uses examples from her own life to give her stories depth, realism, and authenticity. These tales fulfill a variety of functions by providing readers with a personal touch that touches them emotionally, illuminating cultural subtleties, moral teachings, and insights into human behavior. Through the incorporation of these anecdotes into her stories, Sudha Murthy increases the realism of her storytelling and increases their impact, educational value, and audience engagement. (Priya and Suresh)

In a paper titled, "Sane Salvage: Re-reading the Dissemination of Indian Values in Sudha Murthy's the Magic Drum and Other Favourite Stories", the author writes,

In a world where the cacophony of modernity often threatens to drown out the whispers of tradition, Murthy's stories serve as a reminder of the enduring power of Indian values to anchor individuals amidst the storms of life. Through "Sane Salvage," readers are invited to embark on a journey of rediscovery, where the pages of Murthy's book become a sacred sanctuary for the preservation and celebration of India's cultural heritage. (Bag)

In a paper titled, "Social and Cultural Aspects in Sudha Murthy's How I Taught my Grandmother to Read and other Stories" the authors write,

... this paper, it has taught us that the modern western lifestyle is not suitable for peaceful and healthy social life whereas Indian way of life of large and single family of father, mother, grandfather, grandmother, grand daughter and grandson would surely help to pave the way to the above said life and be a good guidance to grandchildren in this way of life. (Suresh and Kugan)

In a paper titled, "Sudha Murthy: A Pioneering Writer in Children's Literature", the authors write,

One of the most notable aspects of Sudha Murthy's writing is her ability to address important social issues and convey meaningful messages through narrative...Sudha Murthy's stories encourage children to think critically, develop moral values, and become socially responsible individuals. Sudha Murthy's book celebrates India's rich cultural diversity. (Arnab Chatterjee)

The paper titled "Moral Lessons in Sudha Murthy's Children Stories" the author writes that the research paper aims to study the morals imbibed through the stories of Sudha Murthy. The present research topic "The Essence of Morals in Children's Literature in special reference to the Stories of Sudha Murthy" is being taken up. (Priyanka Singla)

In the book review penned by Reya Mehrotra for the 'Financial Express' titled "Grandparents' Bag of Stories (Book Review): Lockdown lessons for the young," it's illustrated that,

Sudha Murthy, through her stories, imparts crucial life lessons for children. Each narrative encapsulates a significant moral for the young readers...Despite not being inherently gifted in storytelling, Murthy draws inspiration from her formative years. Growing up in a village devoid of modern amenities like electricity and phones, she reminisces about how people whiled away the time through oral storytelling. Her repository of stories, gifted by her grandparents, fuels her own passion for sharing narratives. (*Grandparents' Bag of Stories (Book Review): Lockdown Lessons for the Young - Lifestyle News | The Financial Express*)

Upon conducting a literature review, it becomes apparent that there is an absence of research on Sudha Murthy's "What's Luck Got to Do with It?" This absence reveals a gap from the perspective of "Lessons Beyond the Pages: Stories of Tradition, Diligence, and True Success."

Introduction:

In the timeless dance of storytelling, we find not just entertainment, but an age-old treasure trove of wisdom. Through the vibrant tapestry of tales, children are not merely listeners but adventurers, navigating the turbulent seas of existence alongside characters who mirror their own struggles and triumphs. Within the folds of these narratives, the art of living is not taught through rigid lessons but through the fluid strokes of imagination. Each story becomes a mirror reflecting life's intricate patterns, where challenges loom like

mountains and dreams shimmer on distant horizons. Through the journeys of heroes and heroines, children glean the subtle nuances of problem-solving, learning to navigate the labyrinth of adversity with courage and resilience. Yet, these stories are not mere fables whispered into the night. They are the architects of our societal ethos, the weavers of cultural tapestries that shape the very fabric of our existence. In the delicate dance between words and hearts, stories transcend the boundaries of time and space, imprinting their indelible mark upon generations. In essence, the power of storytelling lies not merely in its ability to captivate but in its profound capacity to mould minds and hearts. As we journey through the myriad realms of imagination, we discover that within the heart of every tale lies the essence of true living, beckoning us to embrace life's challenges with open arms and stride boldly towards our cherished aspirations.

Sudha Murthy's "What's Luck Got to Do with It?" is a story that delves into the intricacies of life, luck, and human resilience. Through her narrative prowess, Murthy explores the interplay between fate and individual effort, weaving together tales that resonate with readers across cultures and backgrounds. At the heart of Murthy's stories lies a deep appreciation for the human spirit and its capacity to overcome adversity. Each narrative is imbued with a sense of optimism and hope, showcasing the transformative power of perseverance and determination. Murthy's protagonists often navigate through life's challenges with grace and fortitude, inspiring readers to confront their own obstacles with courage and resilience. Central to the theme of "What's Luck Got to Do with It?" is the question of luck and its role in shaping our lives. Murthy prompts readers to ponder whether success and failure are merely the result of chance or if they are influenced by individual choices and actions. Through her narratives, she challenges conventional notions of luck, suggesting that it is not merely a matter of chance but rather a reflection of one's attitude and mindset towards life's opportunities and challenges. Moreover, Murthy's stories are deeply rooted in Indian culture and tradition, offering readers a glimpse into the rich tapestry of Indian society. From the bustling streets of Bangalore to the serene villages of Karnataka, her narratives vividly capture the essence of everyday life in India, complete with its joys, sorrows, and intricacies. One of the most compelling aspects of Murthy's writing is her ability to infuse her stories with moral lessons without being preachy or didactic. Through the experiences of her characters, she imparts valuable insights on topics such as compassion, integrity, and the importance of giving back to society. Murthy's narratives serve as gentle reminders of the virtues that can enrich our lives and foster a sense of empathy and understanding towards others.

Ajja the grandfather's teaching methodology, rooted in storytelling, not only engages the children but also imparts valuable life lessons and moral values. Through his explanation of the origin of the Panchatantra and Bhaskara's Lilavati, Ajja illustrates how storytelling is integral to education throughout history, particularly in Indian culture. The story of the king's sons being sent to the forest to learn from a teacher who imparts wisdom through stories serves as a metaphor for Ajja's teaching approach. He weaves lessons into narratives, ensuring children not only understand the subject matter but also grasp its relevance to their lives. The Panchatantra, with its animal fables and moral teachings, exemplifies how storytelling conveys complex concepts in an accessible and memorable manner. Moreover, Ajja contrasts this traditional approach with the more modern emphasis on data and statistics in formal education. While acknowledging the importance of these methods, he believes in the enduring power of storytelling to inspire and educate.

Ajja's personal experience as a schoolteacher reinforces the efficacy of his methodology. By emphasizing the impact of his stories on former students, he underscores the lasting impression that narratives can have on young minds. The children's laughter and familiarity with the Panchatantra further validate the potency of storytelling as a tool for both education and moral development. In response to Meenu's question about the success of his students, Ajja acknowledges that storytelling alone is not a guarantee of success. He emphasizes the importance of hard work, determination, and luck in achieving one's goals. However, by instilling moral values and critical thinking skills through his stories, Ajja equips his students with the foundation necessary to navigate life's challenges and seize opportunities when they arise.

Ajja narrates a story of a farmer named Ravi who, due to his wife's persuasion, pretends to be an astrologer and unwittingly becomes embroiled in a theft investigation involving forty stolen boxes of treasure. Despite lacking any knowledge or skill in astrology, Ravi finds himself in a precarious situation where he must either locate the stolen treasure or face imprisonment. Through a series of events, Ravi cleverly navigates the situation by using a countdown of dates to deceive the thieves, ultimately leading them to return the treasure. In the end, Ravi declines the king's offer to become the royal astrologer, choosing instead to live a simple and honest life with his wife.

The story of Ravi illustrates several themes that align with the objectives of the paper, emphasizing the importance of integrity, humility, and staying true to oneself amidst challenges. Here's how the content connects to these objectives:

Integrity: Ravi, despite being pressured by his wife to impersonate an astrologer for personal gain, maintains his honesty and integrity throughout the ordeal. Despite his lack of knowledge in astrology, he refuses to deceive people for his benefit. His decision to stick to his principles, even in the face of potential danger, showcases the importance of integrity in maintaining one's moral compass.

Humility: Ravi's humility is evident in his acknowledgment of his limitations and his willingness to return to his simple life as a farmer. Despite being praised as an accomplished astrologer by others, he remains grounded

and recognizes that his success was largely a matter of chance. His humility contrasts with his wife's desire for material wealth and social status, emphasizing the value of modesty and humility in the pursuit of happiness.

Staying True to Oneself: Throughout the story, Ravi stays true to his identity as a simple farmer, despite the temptations and pressures to adopt a different persona. His refusal to accept the position of royal astrologer reflects his commitment to authenticity and his recognition of his own limitations. By remaining true to himself, Ravi ultimately finds contentment and peace in his life, underscoring the importance of staying true to one's values and identity amidst external pressures. In summary, the story of Ravi serves as a poignant narrative that highlights the significance of integrity, humility, and staying true to oneself in navigating life's challenges and finding fulfilment. These themes align closely with the objectives of the paper, providing valuable insights into the moral and ethical dimensions of human behavior.

Overall, Ajja's teaching methodology highlights the enduring significance of storytelling in education and moral development. By blending ancient wisdom with modern insights, he cultivates in his students a deep appreciation for the power of narrative to shape minds and hearts.

The story of Ravi, the self-sufficient farmer who reluctantly becomes an astrologer due to his wife's insistence, teaches several valuable lessons.

Contentment and Gratitude: Ravi is content with his simple life as a farmer, despite the challenges it brings. His wife, however, is not satisfied and desires more material wealth. This highlights the importance of being content with what one has and being grateful for life's blessings, rather than constantly seeking more.

The Consequences of Greed: Alka's desire for more leads to Ravi reluctantly entering the world of astrology, which ultimately puts them both in a dangerous situation. The story illustrates how greed can lead to unintended consequences and troubles.

The Power of Chance and Luck: Ravi's initial success as an astrologer comes purely by chance, when he absent-mindedly makes a comment that the woman interprets as a prediction. This highlights the role of luck in life and how sometimes unexpected events can lead to favourable outcomes.

Facing Consequences: Despite Ravi's initial success, he realizes the gravity of the situation when he is summoned by the king to solve a serious crime. He faces the consequences of his actions with courage and integrity, even though it means potentially going to jail.

Integrity and Honesty: Despite the temptation of power and wealth, Ravi chooses to remain honest and refuses the offer to become the royal astrologer. He acknowledges his limitations and remains true to himself, ultimately leading to a content and peaceful life.

Compassion and Redemption: Ravi's compassion towards the thieves demonstrates empathy and forgiveness. Instead of seeking revenge or turning them in to the authorities, he helps them escape punishment and ensures the return of the stolen treasure. This highlights the power of compassion and redemption in resolving conflicts and fostering peace. Overall, the story teaches the importance of contentment, integrity, humility, and compassion in navigating life's challenges and finding true happiness and fulfilment. It also warns against the dangers of greed and the consequences of dishonesty.

The lesson learned from Ajja's teaching methodology and his story about Ravi is multifaceted:

The Power of Storytelling: Ajja's approach of teaching through storytelling emphasizes the effectiveness of using narratives to convey complex ideas and moral lessons. It highlights how stories can engage students' imagination, making learning more enjoyable and memorable.

Cultural Heritage: Ajja's reference to traditional Indian storytelling, such as the Panchatantra and Lilavati, underscores the rich cultural heritage of using stories as a tool for education. It emphasizes the importance of preserving and passing down cultural traditions to future generations.

Practical Application: Ajja's insistence on completing tasks before storytelling teaches the importance of discipline, focus, and responsibility. It emphasizes the idea that success often requires diligence and dedication in one's work before indulging in leisure activities.

Hard Work and Determination: Ajja's mention of success requiring hard work, determination, and luck highlights the value of perseverance and effort in achieving one's goals. It suggests that while luck may play a role, it is ultimately one's hard work and determination that lead to success.

Understanding the True Meaning of Success: The story of Ravi demonstrates that material wealth obtained through luck or shortcuts may not lead to true fulfilment or happiness. Ravi's realization that his simple life as a farmer brought more contentment than the gold obtained through chance underscores the importance of finding meaning and satisfaction in life beyond material possessions. In the context of the paper's objective, the story serves as a case study in character development and moral growth. It illustrates how individuals can navigate complex situations with integrity and humility, ultimately learning important life lessons in the process. By analysing the choices and actions of the characters, the paper aims to highlight the significance of these qualities in personal and professional development, emphasizing the importance of ethical decision-making and authenticity in achieving long-term success and fulfilment. Overall, the lesson learned from Ajja's teaching approach and the story of Ravi is that success is not solely determined by luck or material wealth but is instead rooted in hard work, discipline, integrity, and finding contentment in life's simple pleasures. (Murthy)

Conclusion

Learning from Sudha Murthy's "What's Luck Got to Do with It?" encompasses a wide array of themes and insights that can enrich one's understanding of life, resilience, and the human experience. While luck may play a part in shaping our circumstances, Murthy emphasizes the importance of hard work, perseverance, and determination in achieving our goals. Through the experiences of her characters, she underscores the transformative power of resilience and the ability to overcome obstacles through sheer effort and willpower. It depicts characters facing various challenges, whether financial, social, or personal. These challenges serve as opportunities for growth and self-discovery, highlighting the importance of embracing adversity to learn, evolve, and ultimately, thrive. Murthy's narrative underscores the importance of kindness, compassion, and generosity towards others. Whether it's helping a stranger in need or extending a helping hand to those less fortunate, her stories emphasize the profound impact of small acts of kindness in fostering a sense of community and making the world a better place. Through her depiction of Indian culture and tradition, Murthy offers readers a glimpse into the rich tapestry of Indian society. From the celebration of festivals to the importance of familial bonds, her stories provide valuable insights into the customs, rituals, and values that shape Indian life. "What's Luck Got to Do with It?" prompts readers to question preconceived notions about luck, success, and failure. By challenging conventional wisdom, Murthy encourages readers to adopt a more nuanced understanding of life's uncertainties and to recognize the role of agency and choice in shaping our destinies. Murthy's narratives often celebrate the simple joys of life and the importance of gratitude and contentment. Through her characters, she reminds readers to appreciate life's blessings, no matter how modest, and to find happiness in the present moment rather than constantly striving for more. Overall learning from Sudha Murthy's "What's Luck Got to Do with It?" involves embracing the complexities of life, cultivating resilience in the face of adversity, and fostering a spirit of kindness, empathy, and gratitude towards others. Murthy's stories serve as poignant reminders of the universal truths that bind us all as human beings, transcending cultural boundaries and resonating with readers of all ages and backgrounds.

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