

# The Harmony of the Society and Art in Sudha Murthy's Children's Literature

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Article Detail:	Abstract
<p>Received: 29 Sep 2025; Received in revised form: 24 Oct 2025; Accepted: 31 Oct 2025; Available online: 02 Nov 2025</p> <p>©2025 The Author(s). Published by International Journal of English Language, Education and Literature Studies (IJEEL). This is an open access article under the CC BY license (<a href="https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/">https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/</a>).</p> <p><b>Keywords</b> – culture, humanity, art, transformation, human expressions, folk songs.</p>	<p><i>“Art is not what you see, but what you think and feel about the world”---- Edger Degas.</i></p> <p>It is said that art and culture are deeply connected. They cannot exist without each other. Art is the creative expression of human emotions, thoughts, and experiences, while culture is the shared way of life of a group of people – including their traditions, beliefs, civilization, way of life, values, and customs. Art reflects culture, and culture gives meaning and direction to art. The relationship between art and culture shows how people express who they are and how they live. Art grows out of culture. Every society creates its own forms of art – paintings, music, dance, literature, architecture, and crafts – that represent its history and identity. For example, Indian classical dance expresses devotion and spirituality, while folk songs reflect the joys and sorrows of rural life. Similarly, art from different countries shows the diversity of their cultural experiences. Through art, people preserve their culture and heritage and pass it on to the next generation.</p> <p><i>The purpose of art is washing the dust of daily life of our souls”----- Pablo Picasso</i></p> <p>Culture also shapes how we understand and value art. What one society considers beautiful or meaningful may differ in another culture. For instance, tribal art focuses on community life and nature, while modern art often expresses individual emotions and struggles. This shows that art is not only a personal creation but also a social and cultural product. At the same time, art influences culture, tradition, heritage and civilization. It can change people’s ideas, inspire social movements, and create unity. Artists use their work to question injustice, promote peace, and celebrate human dignity. In this way, art becomes a powerful force for cultural growth and transformation. When people experience art – through stories, music, or images – they connect with emotions and ideas that help them understand their culture better. The relationship between art and culture is therefore both reflective and dynamic. Art mirrors the culture from which it arises, and culture evolves through artistic innovation. Together, they help humanity record its past, understand its present, and imagine its future.</p>

## I. INTRODUCTION

Our first Prime Minister Pt. J. L. Nehru said: "Art and literature are the soul of a civilization."

Sudha Murthy is one of the most respected contemporary Indian writers whose works connect art, society, and human values in a simple yet powerful way. Her contribution to children's literature is remarkable because she uses stories not only to entertain but also to educate young minds about life, culture, society, town, heritage and moral values. Through her simple language and realistic storytelling, she creates a deep harmony between social realities and artistic imagination. This research paper focuses on understanding how society and art come together in Sudha Murthy's children's literature and how her stories play an important role in shaping young readers' thinking. Hence, Sudha Murthy is a famous Indian author. She writes in English and Kannada. Her books are mostly for children and adults. She also writes short stories and novels. Her stories are simple but meaningful. They teach lessons about life, values, and society. Many of her stories are inspired by real life. She observes people and society carefully. Her writings reflect Indian culture and social issues.

Therefore, one of the main themes in her works is cultural values. She regards that honesty, kindness, and simplicity are important. In many of her stories, characters show courage and goodness. They help others without expecting anything in return. For example, in her book *Three Thousand Stitches*, she shares her experiences helping poor and marginalized people. She shows that small acts of kindness can make a big difference.

On the other hand, another important theme is social responsibility. Sudha Murthy often writes about helping society. She encourages readers to think about others and contribute to the community. She shows that education, health, and equality are important for a better society. Many of her stories reflect the struggles of poor people. She writes about children who want to study but face difficulties. She also writes about women who fight for their rights.

Whereas empowerment of women is a strong theme in her work. Many of her female characters are brave and independent. They face social and family challenges but do not give up. They work hard to

achieve their dreams. Sudha Murthy herself is an example of a strong woman. She was an engineer and a social worker. Her stories encourage women to be confident and self-reliant.

Thus, education is another recurring theme. Sudha Murthy believes education can change lives. Many of her stories show children who want to learn despite difficulties. She writes about teachers and schools. Her stories often highlight the importance of knowledge and learning. Education is also connected to equality. She writes that education can help reduce poverty and discrimination. Her books also explore family values and relationships. Family is important in Indian culture, and she shows this clearly. Her stories describe love, respect, and understanding between family members. Sometimes she shows conflicts in families but also how they are solved. Her stories emphasize caring for parents, siblings, and children. They also teach respect for elders and traditions.

In fact, Sudha Murthy often writes about courage and perseverance. Her characters face challenges in life. Some face poverty, illness, or social problems. Despite these challenges, they continue to try and never give up. Her stories inspire readers to be strong and face difficulties. Courage is not only physical; it is also about standing up for truth and justice. Honesty and integrity are also common themes. Her stories show that being honest is always the best choice. People who cheat or lie may succeed for a while but face consequences later. Her stories teach that honesty brings respect and peace of mind. She often shows simple people who are honest and face challenges with dignity.

Clearly, Sudha Murthy also writes about compassion and empathy. She encourages readers to understand others' problems. Many characters in her books help the needy. She writes about the poor, disabled, and elderly. She shows that empathy can create a caring society. Her stories teach that small acts of kindness can have a big impact on someone's life. Cultural and social issues are another theme in her works. She writes about Indian festivals, traditions, and rural life. Her stories show how people live in villages and cities. She also highlights problems like gender inequality, child labor, and caste discrimination. Her writing helps readers understand social realities and

cultural values. She combines storytelling with moral lessons.

On the other hand, Simplicity of life is a key message in her books. Sudha Murthy believes that happiness comes from simple things. Wealth and luxury are not the only ways to live well. Characters in her stories are often ordinary people. They live simple lives but are content. She teaches that satisfaction and peace come from values, not money. Hope and optimism are present in almost all her stories. Even in difficult situations, her characters do not lose hope. She believes life can improve with effort and positive thinking. Her stories inspire readers to remain hopeful. They teach that problems can be solved with patience and courage.

Indeed another important theme is the importance of giving back to society. Sudha Murthy herself works in social service. She writes about donating, volunteering, and helping others. Her stories encourage readers to contribute to society. She shows that giving is not only about money but also about time, care, and effort. Friendship and love are also highlighted. Her stories often show strong bonds between friends. She shows that true friends support each other in good and bad times. Love is shown as caring, respectful, and selfless. Her stories teach that relationships should be nurtured with trust and understanding. Moral lessons are central to her writings. Every story has a message for the reader. Her messages are clear and easy to understand. She teaches life lessons in a simple way. Children can read her books and learn about honesty, hard work, and kindness. Adults can reflect on values and society through her stories.

Sudha Murthy's themes are universal. They are not limited to a particular age, gender, or culture. Her stories appeal to children, young adults, and elders. Her books are easy to read but full of wisdom. She writes stories that stay in the mind and heart. Her stories encourage readers to become better human beings. Sudha Murthy's works cover themes of human values, social responsibility, women empowerment, education, family, courage, honesty, compassion, cultural awareness, simplicity, hope, giving, friendship, and moral lessons. She writes in simple and easy language so everyone can understand. Her stories teach lessons about life, culture, value and society. They inspire readers to be

kind, honest, hardworking, and socially responsible. Her works are a mirror of society and a guide for living a good life.

Her books show that literature is not only for entertainment. It can educate, inspire, and transform people. Sudha Murthy's writing is a bridge between simple storytelling and meaningful lessons. Her themes make her works timeless and valuable for all readers.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In fact, many scholars have studied Sudha Murthy's works for their moral values, simplicity, and social message. Her stories are often discussed for how they combine art and social life. According to critics, Sudha Murthy's children's books such as, *The Magic Drum*, *Grandma's Bag of Stories and Other Favorite Stories*, and *How I Taught My Grandmother to Read* present Indian traditions, family relations, and moral lessons in an artistic way. Researchers note that her writing uses everyday experiences to teach honesty, kindness, and compassion. Scholars and critics have mentioned that Sudha Murthy's literary art lies in her power of simple storytelling that reaches young minds easily. Her works have been seen as a bridge between traditional cultural folk tales and modern values. Studies also show that her stories promote cultural awareness and social responsibility. Some researchers have compared her with writers like R. K. Narayan for her realistic and simple style.

Overall, the review of earlier studies shows that Sudha Murthy's children's literature connects art, culture, and social values effectively. However, there is still scope to study how her artistic expression creates harmony between society and literature in the modern context.

Indeed, the harmony of society and art in her literature is seen in how she presents real-life situations with creative imagination. Sudha Murthy does not create fantasy worlds far from reality; instead, she finds art in everyday life. For example, her characters are poor and simple people—like grandparents, villagers, teachers, farmers, and students—who show that goodness, love, and honesty can bring happiness and change the world. The stories teach moral and righteous lessons without

being preachy. They show art as a mirror of society, helping readers see beauty in simple acts of kindness and truth.

Another important aspect of Sudha Murthy's children's literature is her artistic use of storytelling techniques. She combines folk tales, moral parables, and realistic incidents to create interest and emotional connection. Her language is simple and clear, so even young readers can easily understand her message. The artistic rhythm of her narration, the moral tone, and the emotional appeal make her stories memorable, real and meaningful. The combination of art and social message is the key strength of her writing. Sudha Murthy's work also represents gender sensitivity and social awareness. Many of her stories focus on women's strength, goodness education, and the importance of equality. She shows that education and liberty can change lives and that every child – boy or girl – has the right to learn and dream. Her stories inspire readers to respect human dignity and social justice. Through artistic storytelling, she addresses issues such as poverty, inequality, and compassion for others, making her works socially relevant and educational. In this way, Sudha Murthy's children's literature serves as a bridge between art and social life. Her stories use artistic creativity to teach moral and social lessons. They reflect the Indian way of life, where storytelling has always been a form of education and culture. The social values in her works promote empathy, honesty, respect, and responsibility. The artistic quality of her writing makes these values enjoyable and lasting in the minds of readers. This research concludes that Sudha Murthy's children's literature is not just about storytelling – it is about shaping character and society. The harmony between society and art in her writing creates a unique space where imagination meets reality and moral education meets creativity. Her stories continue to inspire generations of readers to live with kindness, goodness, humbleness, courage, and a sense of purpose. Thus, Sudha Murthy's contribution to children's literature stands as a fine example of how literature can be both socially meaningful and artistically beautiful.

### RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

The main objective of this study is to understand how Sudha Murthy creates harmony between society and art in her children's literature.

> It aims to explore the social values, moral lessons, and artistic qualities in her stories.

>The study also focuses on how her writing reflects Indian culture, traditions, and ethics in a simple way.

> Another objective is to examine how her artistic storytelling helps in the moral and emotional development of children.

>The research also seeks to highlight her role in connecting literature, art, and social awareness.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research paper is based on a qualitative and analytical method. It studies the selected works of Sudha Murthy to understand how she combines social values and artistic expression in her children's literature. Really the study uses textual analysis to examine stories like *Grandma's Bag of Stories*, *The Magic Drum and Other Favorite Stories*, and *How I Taught My Grandmother to Read*. These texts are analyzed for themes such as morality, goodness, reality, social harmony, art, and cultural values.

The research also includes a descriptive approach, where the social, cultural and heritage background of her writings is described to understand the meaning behind her stories. Secondary sources such as books, journals, critical essays, and online articles have been used to support the study and provide different viewpoints. The purpose of the methodology is to interpret Sudha Murthy's writing in a simple and systematic way. It follows the standard rules of literary research – collection of data, analysis of text, comparison of ideas, and drawing conclusions. This method helps to explore how her stories create a bridge between culture, countryman, rustic life, art, literature, and society, making them both educational and artistic for young readers.

### IV. ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY

Sudha Murthy's children's literature presents a unique combination of art and social culture. Her stories and fictions are simple yet meaningful, making

them accessible to young readers. The analysis shows that her writing connects real-life experiences with moral and ethical lessons in a creative way. She focuses on characters from ordinary social backgrounds, such as villagers, grandparents, teachers, and students. Through these characters, she teaches children about honesty, kindness, compassion, and courage. The artistic element in her stories lies in her use of engaging storytelling, folk elements, and vivid descriptions that bring the social environment to life.

Clearly, in books like *Grandma's Bag of Stories*, Sudha Murthy uses folk tales to illustrate social values. Each story carries a moral lesson while reflecting Indian traditions and cultural norms. Children learn about respect for elders, gender equality, education, and helping others through the narrative. The use of simple and easy language, short sentences, and relatable situations makes her literature educational and entertaining at the same time. This artistic simplicity ensures that the social messages are easily understood and remembered.

Finally, Sudha Murthy's writing also emphasizes the importance of culture and value. Many stories and fictions are set in villages, countrysides, small towns, or traditional households, highlighting the customs, rituals, values, heritage and daily life of Indian society. This creates a cultural connection for children, helping them understand their heritage. The stories are not just imaginative; they are grounded in social and family reality, showing how art and culture can reflect life. By presenting social issues in a gentle and artistic manner, she encourages critical thinking and empathy among young readers.

Whereas, another important aspect of her work is the harmony between moral education and entertainment. Sudha Murthy does not preach; instead, she shows through events and character behavior how one should act. For example, in *How I Taught My Grandmother to Read*, the story teaches patience, learning, and the value of education while keeping the narrative lively and engaging. Her artistic storytelling ensures that children absorb the social lessons naturally, without feeling forced.

Moreover, her literature contributes to social awareness. Topics such as countrysides, poverty, gender discrimination, honesty, and respect for elders

are included thoughtfully. The artistic representation of these themes helps children understand complex social concepts in a simple way. Through repetition of moral values in enjoyable stories, she shapes the ethical, real, true and social understanding of her young audience.

## V. CONCLUSION

Sudha Murthy's children's literature successfully combines art and social life. Her creative storytelling, cultural representation, and moral guidance make her works educational, entertaining, and socially relevant. By analyzing her books, it becomes clear that she bridges the gap between artistic expression and societal values. Her stories serve as a model for how children's literature can nurture empathy, social responsibility, and cultural awareness. The harmony between society and art in her writing makes her literature timeless, meaningful, and influential for readers of all ages.

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