

## Sudha Murty as a Liberal Feminist

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**Abstract:** Feminism is a movement that has come to stand up for women. People who support feminism are called feminists. Feminists discuss women and their struggles in their lives and in society. Feminist approach can differ, but the goal is to address women's issues and the challenges they face in their lives. Some feminists mention feminism by distinguishing the differences between men and women in society. However, others discuss feminism without making such comparisons. In feminism, feminists fight for women's rights. The present study aims to make a serious effort to examine feminism and how Sudha murty implements in her novels. Therefore, it is necessary to learn about feminism for a better understanding.

**Keywords:** Feminism, liberal feminism, subjugation of women and egalitarianism.

### Introduction:

Feminism is a movement that started in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century in Europe. It started for the women and their rights. Feminists try to raise the issues in society that suffocates women and their freedom by presenting them in their writings. Subjugating women is not a new occurrence in every field possible. Women were and are oppressed, biased and tortured in the society, where women goddess praised and devoted. In fact there are books from our ancient history which indicated the women oppression. Bearing the pain and being unable to express it to the outside world due to their circumstances is one of the reasons behind the emergence of feminism. A movement emerged to give voice to those who were voiceless in their families and in society. Some feminists write about the sufferings of others, while some are the ones who suffer. Exposing the issues and challenges faced by women is paramount concern of feminism. Standing up for women rights such as right to vote, equal pay, work in the public office, right to study, reproductive rights, right to protection are the matter of great concern in feminism. Feminist perspectives differ from person to person. Some feminists advocate for women's rights by comparing women and men. Some will talk only about women and their issues without criticizing or abusing men. They just focus on the issues of women in the society and how can we bring change for a better development. They simply present the things as they are. Sudha Murty is one of those kinds.

Virginia woolf said -"As a woman I have no country. As a woman my country is the whole world."

Regarding feminism Rebecca West said - "myself have never been able to find out precisely what feminism is: I only know that people call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a doormat."

### Liberal Feminism:

The concept of feminism has divergent types. Black feminism, cultural feminism, eco feminism, main stream feminism, socialist feminism, multi-racial feminism and radical feminism are some of those divergent types. Main stream feminism is also called radical feminism. Liberal feminism targets the issues of women in the workplace, education and political rights. It talks about men and women equality. It discusses marriage life and the equal efforts of males and females for a successful marriage life. Liberal feminism addresses gender equality, including equal pay in the workplace and equal right to vote. It critiques gender based discrimination and advocates for women's rights, it generally doesnot involve criticizing or blaming men as a group. Liberal feminists say that marriage is an equal responsibility of both the man and woman to maintain it without fail. It adds tha Private life has influence on the social or public life of an individual.

"I want to be respected in all of my femaleness because I deserve to be." - Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

"If you try to please everyone, you will please no one. It is impossible to lead your life for others'happiness."

- Sudha Murty, Wise & Otherwise

### Sudha murty:

Sudha murty is a renowned Indian author, educator and philanthropist, widely recognized for her substantial contribution to literature in both Kannada and English. She is also celebrated as the cofounder

of the Infosys Foundation. Born in 1950 in Shiggon, Haveri, Karnataka. In her literary works, she delves into the lives of individual within society, with a particular focus on everyday life scenarios.

### **House of Cards:**

The novel *House of Cards*, Sudha murty introduces us to Mridula, a young school teacher from a village in Karnataka comes from an upper middle class family. Her life takes an unexpected turn when she meets Sanjay, a doctor from a middle class family. Despite Sanjay having a crippled hand, Mridula doesn't perceive it as a defect, she loves him for who he is and their love is mutual. They get married with their families support and eventually have a son. Mridula's experience in her new family is a mixed bag. She neither receives mistreatment nor respect as daughter in law. Their life takes a dramatic twist with Sanjay abruptly quits his government job and becomes involved illegal activities. Eventually Sanjay lost interest in Mridula and takes her for granted. In fact their son, Shisir takes his mother for granted and he didn't even care her words. Sanjay didn't even bother about her as he is busy with his work. Being vexed with his behavior and upon discovering Sanjay's involvement in these illegal practices, Mridula makes a courageous decision. She chooses to leave Sanjay and stands on her own feet, embracing a future filled with uncertainty.

Mridula decision to leave her husband, Sanjay and embrace and uncertain future demonstrates her desire for autonomy and independence. Liberal feminism emphasizes women's freedom to make choices for themselves, including the decision to leave a marriage that is no longer in their best interest. Mridula's love for Sanjay despite his physical disability reflects the liberal feminism idea of love based on equality and acceptance, rather than conforming to traditional gender roles or societal expectations. Mridula's choice to stand on her own feet and build an independent life after leaving her husband underscores the importance of economic empowerment for women. Liberal feminism advocates for equal access to opportunities and resources for women to achieve financial independence. Mridula's actions challenge traditional gender roles and expectations within marriage and society. She refuses to accept mistreatment and takes control of her own destiny, aligning with the liberal feminist goal of breaking down gender based constraints. Mridula's decision to leave her husband highlights the liberal feminist belief in the equality of individuals where women should have the same rights and opportunities as men and the freedom to make choices that align with their interest and wellbeing.

### **Gently Falls the Bakula :**

*Gently falls the Bakula* revolves around the lives of Shrikanth and Shrimathi. They are neighbours, and their families have a tumultuous relationship. Despite this, Shrikanth and Shrimathi share a childhood friendship that eventually blossoms into love, leading to their marriage.

Shrimathi's mother, kamala is a school teacher while her father Shrikanthrao seems to rely entirely on his wife for support. Surprisingly, Kamala still faces oppression within her in-laws household. In contrast, Shrikanth's mother is a homemaker, and his father passed away when he was only seven years old.

Shrimathi had to set aside her ambition to study history in order to marry Shrikanth. Although Shrikanth constantly encouraged her to pursue her dreams, circumstances prevented Shrimathi from doing so. She endures ill treatment from her in-laws but remained supportive of her husband. Unfortunately, Shrimathi didn't receive the appreciation she deserved from Shrikanth, as he had very little time to spare outside of work. She sacrificed her lifelong ambition, yet Shrikanth couldn't even spare a day to spend with her. It's important to note that Shrikanth's actions were unintentional, driven by his demanding job that left him with little time for anything else. In the end, Shrimathi decides to leave Shrikanth and pursue her ambition of studying History.

Shrimathi initially had ambitions to study History, but she had to set them aside due to societal expectations and her marriage to Shrikanth. This reflects a liberal feminist theme, as liberal feminists advocate for equal opportunities and the right to pursue one's ambitions and education, irrespective of gender.

The novel portrays traditional gender roles, where Kamal, mother of Shrimathi is a working woman while Shrikanthrao, father of Shrimathi relies on his wife for support. This situation highlights the unequal division of labour and expectations placed on women, which is a concern addressed by liberal feminists.

Shrimathi's decision to leave Shrikanth and pursue her ambition to study History reflects the liberal feminist's emphasis on women's agency and their right to make choices about their own lives and careers, independent of societal pressures or male expectations.

Shrikanth's encouragement of Shrimathi to pursue her dreams aligns with liberal feminist principles of supportive and egalitarian relationships, where partners respect each other's aspirations and work together to achieve them.

Although Shrimathi's situation is primarily about gender inequality, it also highlights the intersectionality of her experience. Her ability to pursue her ambition is hindered not only by her gender but also by her familial and societal circumstances, including her in-law's expectations.

**Conclusion:**

Sudha Murty presents her views and perceptions of understanding between men and women for a successful life through these novels. Although the two young couple had deep love for each other, men struggled gain the trust of women due to their demanding work. Sudha Murty explores her concerns regarding female oppression within the context of in-laws through the characters. She promotes liberal feminism by emphasizing the importance of self-employment and women's rights through the characters of Shrimathi, Mridula and Kamla, all without Criticism.

“With my experience in life, I want to tell you that having good relationships, compassion and peace of mind is much more important than achievements, awards, degrees or money.”— Sudha Murty

Sudha Murty illustrates contrasting perceptions of people through the couple Shrimathi & Shrikanth, Mridula & Sanjay, Kamla & Shrikanthrao. Shrikanthrao does very little, yet Kamala accepts him and continues her life alongside him. In contrast, Shrimathi and Mridula couldn't bear their husband's excessive devotion to work. This difference in attitude might be attributed to generational shifts and evolving women's perspectives, which have led to the emergence of new women in society. The novel imparts important lessons to women about necessity of self-empowerment and leading a life that fulfils their souls.

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