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CULTURAL-SOCIALISM IN WISE AND OTHERWISE: A SALUTE TO LIFE BY SUDHA MURTY



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ABSTRACT

Culture and society are the most important aspects in the economic, educational, social, emotional, psychological and philosophical development of human being. The society could not be formed ideally without culture and the cultural bond could not be bound without the ideal society. Socialism is an aspect which exchanges political, economic, emotional and psychological theory and produces a new society. Fifty-one real life experiences of Sudha Murty are with the full of cultural-socialisms under the title *Wise and Otherwise: A Salute to Life*. The author, Sudha Murty has keenly observed and drafted minutely the common man and as usual society, especially the customs, positivity, wisdom, social behavior of a particular social group, characters of different people, different economic conditions of different families, etc.

The honesty of a small child who is economically poor is more superior to an educationist who is studied in any school, college or university. A neatly-dressed and good at work, a pleasant

personality and so called a gold medalist is not at all honest like Hanumanthappa who is very poor, not able to fulfill his daily needs. The author proved with her two real life experience that *honesty comes from the heart not from the school, college or university*. Some real life experiences of the author proved that no one is different from another; everyone is equal on the basis of caste, community, religion and any other factor. One of the beggar families transformed from Mumbai to Kutch, Gujarat during the earthquake and without any hesitation they settle with the victims during earthquake. This family realized there that they were equal because all the people were homeless, sufferers, strugglers and no one was treated like rich and poor as well different than other. One of friend of the author got lesson from a beggar and completely changed her life, other changed her life after reading a novel, *Mahashweta*. So many social and cultural factors are ideally painted through the fifty-one stories of *Wise and Otherwise: A Salute to Life*.

KEYWORDS

Culture, socialism, rituals, rewards, behavior, wisdom, positivity, human relationship, humanity, honesty, dignity

RESEARCH PAPER

Introduction

Culture is an aspect *which studies the attitude, behavior and characteristics of a particular social group for a long time. The ideas, customs, and social behavior of particular social groups are shown and impact of it on society is highlighted in culture.* The culture of particular social groups: their attitude, behavior, characteristics of differ personalities, their customs, festivals, and relationship of them among all is shown in *Wise and Otherwise: A Salute to Life* by Sudha Murty. Socialism is *a political as well as economic theory of social organization which advocates that the means of production, distribution, and exchange should be regulated by a community as a whole.* The economic theory of social organization and the financial condition of a social group is an effective aspect on the production of social ethics, social bond, humanity, culture and ideology in human behavior. The exchange of these above in people and formation of an ideal society is affected by socialism. Sudha Murty's *Wise and Otherwise: A Salute to Life* is the best example of socialism because the cultural exchange and the ideologies of the society are portrayed through fifty-one stories in this non-fictional book. These fifty-one stories are different types of real life experiences of the author in different situations. *Cultural-Socialism in Wise and*

Otherwise: A Salute to Life by Sudha Murty under this article, varies in behavior of a social group, varies in financial conditions of different social group and families, different characteristics of different personalities, their attitude, customs and so much cultural-socialisms and its aspects related culture and society are pointed out.

Cultural-Socialism and its aspects are the core factors of every social group, community, caste, religion and society as well. Human nature, behavior, wisdom, positivity, human relationship, humanity, honesty, dignity, living style, social issues, domestic crises and value of money in life are correlated with humans and being humans. Humanity, human being, society and people are affected by the above cultural-socialism, and its different factors. Each and every story of this non-fictional book is full with the above mentioned cultural-socialism. *Wise and Otherwise: A Salute to Life*, the title of the book is absolutely fine because the author saluted her life as she learnt so many things from her own life that everyone can learn from its own life. It needs to observe seriously only. Everyone has these life experiences in their own lives. How should be an ideal life of one's? So many problems of the society are discussed and shown the various ways and solutions. The socio-cultural factors like behavior of a person, the character of a person, the value of money in life of a human, attitude to see towards a life, financial condition of a person and effect of it on one's life and the culture, customs, traditions, festivals and so many things are discussed in these stories. These things and all cultural-socialisms are discussed through the own real life experiences of the author, Sudha Murty due to that the author saluted her life and penned fifty-one real life experiences under the title *Wise and Otherwise: A Salute to Life*. And every story's cultural-socialism is a milestone to the readers. The travelers take help of the milestones to travel on road and the mariners take help of light house in the ocean as it is, the readers can take help of *Wise and Otherwise: A Salute to Life* to being human.

Discussion

It is one of the experiences of the author that taught her a lot about honesty. Honesty is not the mark of any class nor is it related to education or wealth. It cannot be taught at any university. In most people, it springs naturally from the heart like Hanumanthappa, a simple village boy who is eighth rank holder in the Secondary School Leaving Certificate results in Karnataka. There was a silent and calm photograph with his interview printed in a newspaper mentioning his poor condition. The author decided to take responsibility of Hanumanthappa's further study after knowing his financial condition. A simple village boy, Hanumanthappa expected only Rs 300

per month for his two years course *at the Teacher's Training College in Bellary, Karnataka*. The author sent Rs 1800 second time for the next six months amount. But Hanumanthappa sent an envelope with currency and a note that surprised to the author; *Madam, it is kind of you to have sent me money for the next six months. But one month, our college was closed for holidays and during the next month, there was a strike. So I stayed at home for those two months. My expenditure during these months was less than Rs 300 per month. Therefore, I am sending you Rs 300 that I have not used for the last two months. Kindly accept this amount.* It was unbelievable but true, in such a poverty so honesty. It was such experience; the author realized that honesty is not belonging from a class, community, religion or economic class. Honesty comes from the heart only.

It is one side of the coin of our society; the second side is completely different than this. It is not honesty but human foibles. It was another experience of the author, once she was on the project visit. A young, well-mannered, neatly-dressed and good at work, a pleasant personality was coordinating to the author in one of the projects. It was a pleasant surprise to the author to see good quality in his work and such a professional touch. After the official visit, the young man introduced his wife and two years old son to the author as the author was invited at his house. His house was well kept and decorated. He praised his wife about her beautiful voice, cooking and her achievements in school days then he called his two years old child. Immediately the small child came and stood with folded hand, almost he was trained to do so. The small child forcefully instructed to recite rhymes that he does not like it. It was realized to me that the young man expected to hear some complement for his small kid and she said that your child is good at his age. According to the young man, two years old boy was perfectly trained and proudly it was said that heredity and genes were also played very important role in his personality. The author, Sudha Murthy keenly observed how the modern people are busy in boasting and praising about them, their happiness, and their family. According to the young man, he himself was good in school days and a gold medalist from BVB Engineering College, Hubli (Karnataka) in 1972. Enthusiastically, the author asked him to see his gold medal again and again but he failed to produce it. He gave some unbelievable answers that he kept it in bank locker because it was so precious to him and so on. At last, after a lot of discussion while leaving his house, the author cleared him that the gold medal, in 1972 from BVB Engineering College, Hubli (Karnataka) was awarded to the author herself and it is only one gold medal in a year. The young man realized his

talent and honesty also, and gave a reply with shutting his door. The honesty of Hanumanthappa is the one side of the Indian society and the second side is a well-dressed, good qualified man who did only show-off.

All the fifty-one anecdotal stories have given altogether interesting insights into different aspects of the real life. These all stories have painted with the cultural-socialism of real life experiences with those people who came in Sudha Murthy's life direct and indirectly : changes in personality with passage of time, dowry death, forced prostitution; a beggar transforms a pessimist to an optimist, nostalgic memories of childhood, human emotions, compassion and greed, human dignity, charity as well as exploitation. These all stories just act as a witness to a common society, like the discussion between marriage brokers regarding the impact of the IT sectors growth has had on their business. We could see the real picture, real cultural-socialism of the real rural India.

There are so many valuable experiences and so much valuable cultural-socialism in *Wise and Otherwise: A Salute to Life* by Sudha Murthy. As usual society and common people with simple living style are minutely observed day to day life and pointed-out cultural-socialism only from her real life experiences by the author. Like *humanity* in the Sahyadri Hills, a lesson from a beggar for Meena, *immorality* of a joyful family without grief after the death of a family member, *dowry death* under the name of stove bursts, *morality* about the mop count did not match after an operation, the poor lady was ready to leave her job but not to do compromise about health of a patient, a woman with a mind, *living style* of that time in those days telegram, the way of communication, a red-letter day; a holiday, *human nature about* living through the change, *human relationship about* a bond of Rakhi, relationship between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law, *wisdom* about forgetting our own history, a novel; *Mahashweta* changed life of a reader, difference between being literate and being educated, *dignity* that is, the teacher made his students confident and strong to face any difficulties in life, positivity and happiness, a life with dignity, women's problem; especially unwed women, value of money, and so many cultural and social problems are discussed, and shown ideal solutions for them. These are very common and simple real life experiences but the factors of socialism and cultural are very valuable. The author has got this cultural-socialism from the smallest thing like a relationship among family members and to the universal thing like the Noble Prize. Some of the experiences

are from the rural real India and some of the experiences are from the universe but all the cultural-socialism is the glocal.

Three people were awarded by the Noble prize for peace by following non-violence of Mahatma Gandhi. They were Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela and Aung San Suu Kyi of Myanmar. Martin Luther King Jr. disclosed the fact and praised Mahatma Gandhi when he received the Noble Prize at Oslo in Norway that he would follow the path of non-violence of Mahatma Gandhi in America. Ironically, Gandhi never received the Noble Prize. The author pointed out one smaller issue in the society; that is very small problem in foreign countries but the same problem is the biggest issue of life (Some time it is the end of life.) of a person in India that is an unwed mother. The author gave the best example of Kusuma, an Indian rural unwed mother and Mary, a Norwegian unwed mother. When Kusuma's parents came to know that Kusuma became mother before marriage, they were thinking what the society will react and how they will face to the society as they were living only for the society. At last, Kusuma committed suicide in this depression. The author blamed the Indian society: Are we living for the society or in the society? In the other example, a Norwegian 24 year old girl, Mary had a 6-7 year old son. And simply, without any guilt or shyness she said, "I am not married. But John is my son. I am unwed mother." They didn't feel guilty or they didn't think about the society because they are living in the society only and not living for the society.

Humanity, dignity, positivity and the real cultural-socialism is ideal in a beggar family. One of the friends of the author, Meena is an LIC officer. She earns good salary and enjoys richness. But she has a difficulty that she is always strange, always unhappy with small things in her life. Once, Meena observed a beggar family through her window which lives near Meena's house. Meena always gives leftover to this beggar family. One night it was raining and this family was hungry. Meena was cursing rain because she does not like wet atmosphere, for a meaningless reason she was cursing. It was observed by Meena that the beggar and his granddaughter were playing in the rain on street. Meena realized that they didn't bother about rain and hunger also, even they could not fulfill their primary needs but Meena had everything, though she is unhappy. Meena found cultural-socialism and its aspects; those are positivity, humanity and happiness from this beggar family. If we don't have anything, nothing to bother about something; if we have everything, we always bother about the thing that we don't have. With this beggar's positivity, Meena changed her life and she always became positive and the happiest woman.

One more experience of the beggar is shared and humanity is shown through this experience. There is no difference between the rich and poor during the natural disaster. Once there was earthquake broken in Kutch, Gujarat. The beggar family from Mumbai shifted to Kutch, Gujarat who was struggling for their daily wedges for bread-n-butter. There were many NGOs, government rescue teams and volunteers were trying their level best to help those victims who were trapped in this disaster. There was no difference between rich and poor, in caste and community, in religion and language and culture and social aspects. Everyone was treated equally as a sufferer, struggler, homeless, lost property, and lost something or someone. But the transferred beggar family from Mumbai didn't lose something in this disaster as they were also strugglers, sufferers and homeless. They have nothing to lose, something belong to them. But they were also treated equally with the victims in earthquake. They earned so many things in this disaster. They realized the real humanity in the disaster. They were never treated as a human in Mumbai as they were beggars. They were completely different than the rich and they were inferior to all like in caste, community, religion, language and so many things. A person is different to other person on the basis of caste, community, religion, and so on but everyone is equal in disaster like Kutch earthquake.

Each story covers a facet of human nature and has something cultural-socialism. There are many simple, funny, interesting and valuable stories are composed with the full of cultural-socialism. In one story, she mentioned about a salesgirl, she met in a train, which first haser headache then sold her the balm. In other story she mentioned that the greatest joy to a teacher is to produce students better than him. In another story she talked about miscommunication of a telegram as she got a message 'Father expired'. The author returned to home keeping her all task in office as it is and she realized later on that her friend's father passed away.

Conclusion

The book *Wise And Otherwise* contains fifty-one real life experiences in the form of stories of Sudha Murthy. When she visited different people with different places in different circumstances, she pointed-out different cultural-socialism. Mostly, all stories are around emphasizing the importance of moral values and cultural-socialism about people's behavior in different circumstances. Each story has full with cultural-socialism, moral values, humanity, honesty and ideology of life. There are many more experiences and much more cultural-socialism and its factors are in this book. The enlighten problems by the author in this book; a

family relationship, the economic condition of a family, the simplicity of an ideal life, the modernity, the domestic problems and the feminist problems are shortly highlighted and interlinked with cultural-socialism and its factors; honesty, humanity, wisdom, rituals, human behavior, character, etc. The author tried her level best to portray the real picture, real cultural-socialism of the real rural India like change in personalities with passage of time. Mrs. Murthy was well interlinked with the society; socially, educationally and psychologically, after the minute observation of the society she realized the lacking of the society i.e. dowry death, forced prostitution, nostalgic memories of childhood, compassion and greed, negativity and exploitation especially of women and children, economic problems especially for education, etc. Mrs. Murthy anecdote these fifty-one stories titled Wise and Otherwise: A Salute to Life. These all stories act as a witness of it and the author tried to give proper solutions for mentioned problems.

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