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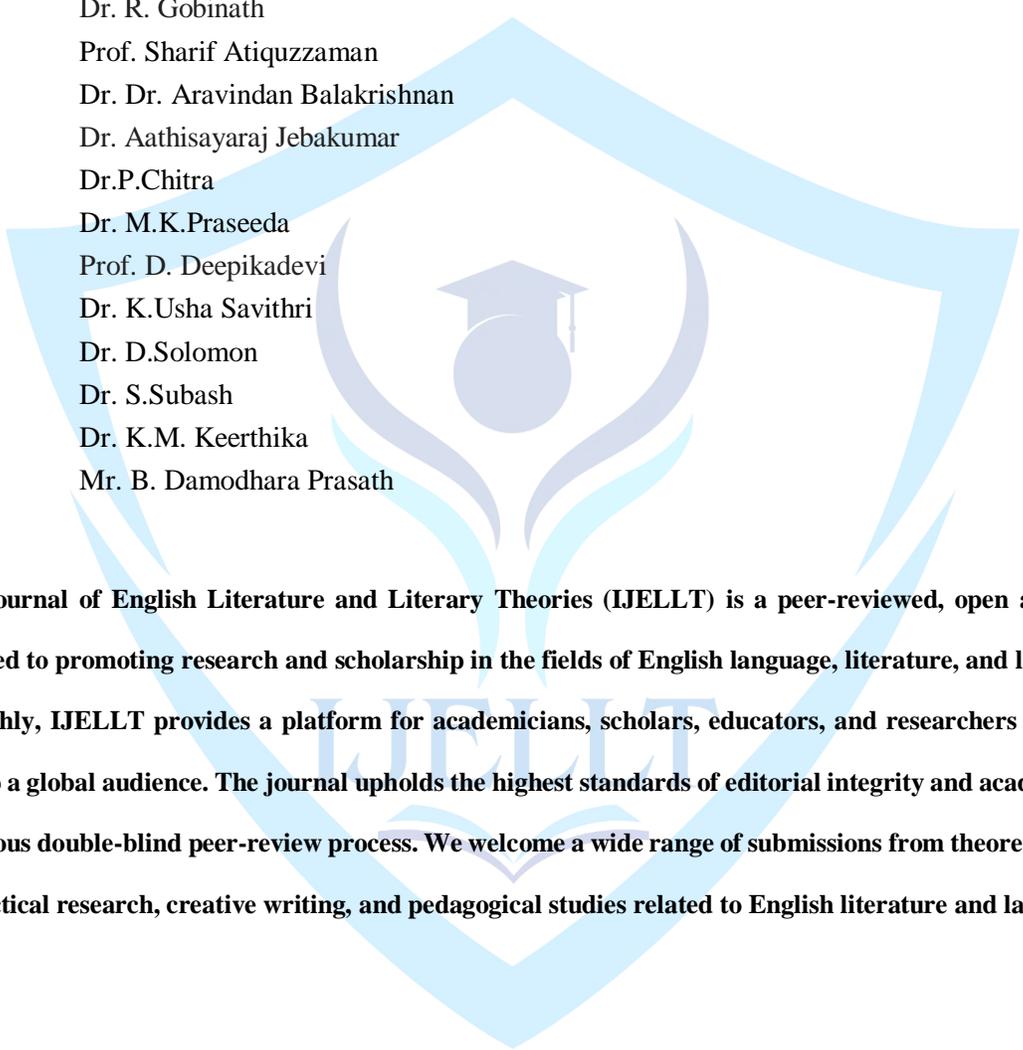
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**Values Beyond Technology: The Relevance of Sudha Murty's Children's Literature for Emotional and Ethical Education in the Digital Age**

**Silja Sukumar**, Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of English, Karpagam Academy of Higher Education, Coimbatore.

**Aparna K.P.**, Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of English, Karpagam Academy of Higher Education, Coimbatore.

**Abstract:** Children's literature of the twenty-first century is faced with a paradox: while digital media have given young readers greater access to information, it has also made it more challenging for them to develop moral and emotional bonds with others. In this respect, children's books by Sudha Murty are very important for imparting understanding of morals and empathy. This article analyses how empathy, gratitude and sensitivity to one another are promoted among contemporary Indian youth through the narratives of Sudha Murty specifically dealing with *How I Taught My Grandmother to Read and Other Stories* (2004), *Grandma's Bag of Stories* (2015) and *The Magic of the Lost Temple* (2015). This article addresses that lack by reading the selected texts *How I Taught My Grandmother to Read*, *Grandma's Bag of Stories* and *The Magic of the Lost Temple* in terms of positive psychology and modern educational theory. The study, therefore, offers the PERMA-H positive psychological model and interpretive textual analysis to identify how Sudha Murty makes use of environmental consciousness, familial relations and moral imagination in addressing the problem of emotional detachment in digital age. The research reveals that her stories provide a context for social and emotional learning which fosters moral responsibility, empathic reasoning, and cultural continuity. Though straightforward style, Murty's tale offers a rich moral framework for those in search of emotional literacy beyond the technology.

**Keywords:** Sudha Murty, Children's Literature, Moral Education, Empathy, Positive Psychology, Digital age.

## Introduction

Literature has emerged as a crucial medium for maintaining human connection and empathy in an era characterised by technology and consumption. Despite being surrounded by technological innovation and immediate fulfilment, children living in this digital era frequently lack ethical behaviour and a profound emotional awareness. In this regard, Sudha Murty's children's books serve as mild yet effective remedies to a loss in moral consciousness. Sudha Murty, one of the most popular writers in India, blends a global moral perspective with cultural roots in her stories. Her straightforward, sympathetic, and deeply human storytelling fosters in young readers an ethical consciousness and emotional intelligence.

Sudha Murty explores themes of empathy, humility, compassion, and social duty in her works, including *How I Taught My Grandmother to Read and Other Stories* (2004), *Grandma's Bag of Stories* (2015), and *The Magic of the Lost Temple* (2015). The narratives frequently feature common people whose moral fortitude develops from consistent acts of compassion and resilience. A young girl teaches her illiterate grandmother to read in *How I Taught My Grandmother to Read*, signifying education as a loving deed. Murty demonstrates the transforming potential of compassion-led learning when the grandmother acknowledges, "For the first time in my life, I felt so helpless" (Murty 9).

Sudha Murty's writings remain relevant today due to their educational value and moral clarity. Her tales show how narrative empathy can be used to teach moral principles through real-life situations. Sudha Murty's work offers what educational theorists refer to as "narrative scaffolding" for emotional development—a place where storytelling becomes ethical education—in a time of digital distraction and emotional detachment.

### Literature Review

Recent studies on Sudha Murthy's children's literature consistently emphasise its ethical, educational, and cultural relevance.

- According to Azeena and D'vaz's (2025) article, *Storytelling as Social Commentary: Analysing the Transformative Power of Sudha Murthy's How I Taught My Grandmother to Read and Other Stories* examines it as an instrument for social critique and suggests that Murthy's stories foster empathy, moral awareness, and social responsibility by addressing ethical dilemmas relevant to readers' contexts.

- In *Enriching Minds and Cultivating Hearts: The Pedagogical Significance of Sudha Murthy's Work*: Bhardwaj (2024). emphasises the educational significance of Murthy's work's educational value by suggesting that her stories contribute to a child's character development and emotional intelligence – both play as key components of modern social emotional learning frameworks – while also contributing to cognitive development.

- Dumpala (2022). *Narrative Techniques of Sudha Murthy and Ruskin Bond in Writing Children's Fiction in Indian English Literature* takes a stylistic perspective, comparing Murthy's storytelling style to that of Ruskin Bond, illustrating Murthy's use of realism, simplicity, and a conversational style to present moral precepts in a way that is accessible and engaging without being overtly moralistic or pedagogical.

- Parinitha (2022) *The Soul and Spirit of Morality in Sudha Murthy's Select Short Story Books for Children*: within this moral context, it claims that Murthy's short stories are strengthened by a deep ethical consciousness that is rooted in an Indian cultural and familial framework with moral qualities such as humility, honesty, and compassion, which emerge through daily events that resonate with a young reader.

- Sasikala (2025). *The Magic Within: Cultural Richness and Life Lessons in Sudha Murthy's The Magic of the Lost Temple*. demonstrating how Murthy incorporates intergenerational ties, communal life, and cultural history to promote a sense of family and cultural continuity in youngsters.

As a collective, these studies present Murty's children's books as a significant medium for value-based storytelling, although very few of the studies refer to her moral vision in connection to the psychological literature on well-being. The current study bridges that gap by utilising positive psychology to examine her literary ethics as tools for social-emotional education.

### **Methodology**

The current study employs a qualitative interpretive methodology that combines literary analysis and educational psychology. It examines the development of ethical and emotional issues through close textual readings of three main stories: *Grandma's Bag of Stories* (2015), *The Magic of the Lost Temple* (2015), and *How I Taught My Grandmother to Read and Other Stories* (2004). Seligman's PERMA-H framework, which identifies components that promote moral learning and emotional well-being, and narrative ethics theories by Martha Nussbaum and Wayne Booth, which highlight the importance of storytelling in fostering empathy and moral imagination, serve as the context for this study. The actual events, which offer an interpretive understanding of ethical growth and emotional literacy without relying on numerical measurements, consist of textual examples, character development patterns, and theme structures.

### **Findings**

The analysis demonstrates how the PERMA-H framework's elements consistently foster emotional intelligence and ethical awareness in Sudha Murty's children's stories. In *How I Taught My Grandmother to Read*, the mutual shift between teacher and student illustrates empathy as an exchange of feelings or communication. Positive emotion is fostered through representations of compassion, gratefulness, and shared happiness. Curiosity-driven learning leads to engagement, especially in *The Magic of the Lost Temple*, where Noonni's immersion in rural life cultivates mindfulness and patience. Sudha Murty states, "Everything around me felt alive, as if the trees were whispering stories of the past" (Murty 112), emphasising an emotionally keen connection with nature. The importance of relationships is highlighted in *Grandma's Bag of Stories* where storytelling is the tool of building the intergenerational relationships that would preserve love, trust, and cultural continuity.

Acts of responsibility and compassionate effort give meaning and accomplishment, reflecting Murty's notion that fulfilment comes more from moral contribution than financial success. Furthermore, the values of straightforwardness, balance, and satisfaction are used to promote health—both ethical and emotional—in opposition to the excessive stimulation and stress that come with modern, digital-age adolescents. When taken as a whole, these results show that Murty's fiction serves as an independent standard for moral growth and emotional health in the modern world.

### **Discussion**

This study shows that Sudha Murty's children's books serve as an insightful and morally sound narrative pedagogy that is in accordance with current issues in psychology, education, and child development. Sudha Murty incorporates moral education, empathy, positive psychology, and the difficulties of the digital age into a cohesive framework that promotes holistic child development through straightforward characters and culturally grounded stories. Her work exemplifies how children's literature can be an essential tool for emotional learning and cultural continuity, apart from being a source of enjoyment.

Her experiences demonstrate that relationships are the most effective way to develop ethics. Mutual respect, humility, and shared responsibility lead to ethical growth in *How I Taught My Grandmother to Read*, demonstrating how values are internalised by experience and emotional connection. The grandmother's realisation, "For the first time in my life, I felt so helpless" (Murty 9), shows self-awareness and a willingness to learn rather than weakness. By encouraging readers to empathise with characters rather than merely impart moral lessons, this relational approach embodies narrative ethics and shows how stories foster moral imagination. This storytelling approach aligns with views that see human relationships—rather than didactic education—as the foundation of children's moral understanding.

Moreover, Sudha Murty promotes children's literature as an emotional and cultural teaching tool. The traditional storytelling framework in *Grandma's Bag of Stories* fosters an environment where focusing attention and listening become essential qualities. She interprets the tradition of storytelling as an emotional pedagogy in *Grandma's Bag of Stories*. Sudha Murty turns the family into a moral microcosm where listening becomes an ethical act when Ajji tells her grandchildren to pay attention, saying, "Now, children, sit quietly" (Murty 14). Thus, storytelling restores patience and attention—two attributes that are challenged in the digital age. By encouraging patience, introspection, and family bonding, these moments contradict the distraction-driven behaviours of digital childhood. As a result, her stories reinforce children's literature's function as a moral medium that combines pleasure with moral development.

Empathy emerges as the main central concept in Sudha Murty's fictional world. Sudha Murty presents empathy as the cornerstone of prosocial behaviour and resilience, from Nooni's growing social and natural environment in *The Magic of the Lost Temple* to the young narrator's empathetic grasp of her grandmother. In the same way, Nooni's interest in rural life in *The Magic of the Lost Temple* develops into an attempt for environmental and communal understanding. Her observation, "City life never taught me that silence can be beautiful" (Murty 78), reflects the core of emotional awareness: being able to seek value in the seemingly insignificant. Whether the young narrator comprehends her grandmother's regret or Nooni develops sensitivity to environment and community, her characters come to grasp others' emotions through modest, ordinary exchanges. These story experiences are closely related to the social and emotional learning (SEL) frameworks that promote perspective-taking, emotional awareness, and responsible decision-making.

## International Journal of English Literature and

Sudha Positive psychology concepts, particularly those related to resilience, emotional equilibrium, and well-being, are also reflected in Sudha Murty's stories. Her experiences exhibit aspects of psychological fulfilment through positive familial relationships, keen engagement with the world, and significant interactions with culture and history. They show how children's moral and mental development can be influenced by positive emotions, connections, and a sense of purpose.

Positive psychology concepts, especially the PERMA-H model, are further reflected in the subjects and structure of Sudha Murty's fiction. Positive emotions (joy and humour), engagement (curiosity and problem-solving), relationships (intergenerational bonds), meaning (cultural heritage), accomplishment (moral growth), and emotional health (balance and self-regulation) are all fostered by her storytelling. She provides young children approachable examples of wellbeing based on moral clarity and emotional connection by incorporating these components into common Indian scenarios.

Ultimately, Sudha Murty's work responds to the conflicts faced by individuals in the digital age in a subtle but powerful way. Her stories re-establish the value of patience, observation, and human presence, even as technology has changed childhood, frequently at the expense of interpersonal warmth and sustained attention. They serve as a reminder to young readers that relationships, experiences, and moral reflection are more beneficial to the growth of imagination than technology. They serve as a reminder to young readers that listening, observing, and caring are the foundations of true understanding.

In general, these findings show that Sudha Murty's stories are much more than merely moral tales; they form a holistic teaching paradigm that incorporates ethical reasoning, cultural memory, and emotional intelligence. Her books encourage children to have a strong emotional compass and a compassionate worldview by balancing traditional values with modern developmental demands. These qualities are still essential for handling the increasingly complex technological environment of today.

### **Conclusion**

Sudha Murty's children's literature demonstrates how storytelling may foster social awareness, moral sensitivity, and emotional intelligence in modern society. She promotes empathy, thankfulness, accountability, and connection through stories based on real-life experiences—qualities that are becoming more and more obscured by the fast-paced and distracting nature of the digital world. When the PERMA-H framework and story morals are used, it becomes clear that Murty's stories serve as an informal pedagogy for ethical development and emotional well-being, together with being enjoyable.

Her work provides children with role models of compassion, resiliency, and meaningful involvement with the world by balancing traditional Indian values with modern educational standards. Finally, Murty's tales serve as an insight to readers that the most profound types of learning continue to arise through interpersonal connections, introspection, and narrative imagination, reaffirming that emotional and ethical literacy continue to be crucial pillars for an effective society.

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