



**THE LOSS OF TWO INNOCENT MOTHERS' SELF-IDENTITY  
IN THE NAME OF STEREOTYPE AND PATRIARCHY IN  
SUDHA MURTY'S THE MOTHER  
I NEVER KNEW**

**P. Sangamithra\* & Dr. K. Deepa\*\***

\* M.Phil Scholar, Department of English, Sri GVG Visalakshi College for Women,  
Udumalpet, Tamilnadu

\*\* Associate Professor & Head, Department of English, Sri GVG Visalakshi College for Women,  
Udumalpet, Tamilnadu

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**Abstract:**

Sudha Kulkarni Murthy was born in the year 1950 in Shiggaon in Karnataka. She is a teacher of Kannada, Marathi, and English in an Indian engineering institute. Also, she is a prolific writer of English and Kannada. She is the chairperson of Infosys Foundation. Her husband N.R. Narayana Murthy is the founder of Infosys. Murthy is best known for her social works. Several of her books were written by her were Novels, Technical books, travelogues, a collection of short stories, non-fiction, and children's books. All her books were translated into major Indian languages. She has received so many awards like R.K. Narayan Award for Literature and the Padma Shri in 2006. Her notable works are *How I taught my Grandmother to read*, *Mahasweta*, *dollar bahu*, and *The Mother I Never Knew*. The present paper focused on Sudha Murty's *The Mother I never knew*. It contains two novellas. One is 'Venkatesh' in which the main character Venkatesh discovers about his stepmother, who is abandoned by his father long before because of his mother's order. Later, son Venkatesh uncovers the story of the past. He decided to help his stepmother. Quote 93-94. Next, is 'Mukesh' in which the character Mukesh discovers that he was an adopted son. Then he loves to know his biological mother and went in search of her. Finally met and spoke to her. The above two novellas delineate about the two of the sons, who are in search of their mothers that they never knew before and had. Murty's novels were mostly grounded on the sufferings of woman and their empowerment. In the present paper, she gives importance to the male as well as female characters. It is focused here that the characters seek for their individuals' self-identity.

**Loss of Self-Identity: By Patriarchy and Stereotype:**

A stable and consistent understanding of oneself was thought to be self-identity. Adolescents and young adults are at a unique transitional period when it comes to forming self-identity. When it comes to intimacy, asserting yourself, and setting clear boundaries for your families, friends, and partner, having a solid sense of self is crucial. In intimate relationships, it will also protect you from feeling abused or resentful.

Patriarchy is a mental, physical, spiritual, economic, and political organization/structuring of society that results from the gradual institutionalisation of sex-based political ties that are developed, sustained, and reinforced by various structures that are closely connected in order to gain unity on the lesser importance of women and their positions. These institutions are linked not only to reinforce men's dominance over women, but also to other systems of isolation, inequality, and/or dominance based on actual or imagined disparities between humans, resulting in States that cater only to the needs and desires of a few influential men.

History with a capital H (recognised patriarchal history) recognises patriarchy as the first structure of dominance, subordination, and exclusion, and it is now a fundamental system of dominance. Surprisingly, despite being the most dominant and long-lasting mechanism of oppression, it is rarely recognised as such, particularly by women. In reality, some feminists reject the presence of patriarchy because one of its institutions is its invisibility.

When a stereotype restricts women's or men's ability to improve their personal skills, seek professional jobs, and make decisions about their lives and life plans, it is negative. Stereotypes, whether hostile/negative or seemingly benign, may be dangerous. For example, child rearing duties often fall solely on women due to the stereotype that women are more maternal.

If gender stereotyping leads to an infringement or abuses of civil rights and basic freedoms, it is incorrect. The refusal to criminalise marital rape based on the stereotype of women as sexual slaves of men is an example of this. Another example is the justice system's inability to keep perpetrators of sexual harassment accountable based on stereotypical expectations on what constitutes acceptable sexual behaviour for women.

The article portrays about how the individuals lost their self-identity because of their own family members and the society. And also shows about the injustice in the terms of stereotypes and patriarchy.

**Venkatesh:**

Venkatesh lives in Bangalore with his family which is small. "he was just 'Madam's husband' to the household help who knew that he had no say in any matter" (Sudha Murty 04). It is because his wife Shanta ran the house efficiently and earns more than her husband. She is considered to be a modern and courageous woman. Murty brought the contrast of both modern and ancient lifestyle of women in her works. His daughter Gauri was his only companion in all his good and Bad. There is a difference of opinion. Shanta argues to do Gauri her MBA.

When Venkatesh is been transferred to Hubli, he met Shankar Master who resembles him. He was more curious and started to investigate this. Finally, he met Baghava (Shankar's mother) and discovered about the past. Venkatesh's father Setu Madhav Rao, was meek at home. He fears to speak against his mother Champakka, who is very dominating. He lost his self-identity by not acting according to his wish. It is because of Champakka that Setu Madhav Rao left Bhagirathi in a miserable state. In Indian society, mostly the decisions of marriage are taken among the parents themselves without the opinions of individuals' interests. The same thing happened in the marital life of Venkatesh. Considering the status of the bride's family, his grandmother marries him to Shanta. She is also money-minded. So far there are so many developments and advancements, but still, the stereotypes aren't changed yet.

Venkatesh is respectable in social and moral activities. He helped many. In Hubli, he lived with Anand Patil and Vijaya's house. They don't have any money. But they loved each other and lives a happy, healthier life than him. Though the Venkatesh family is very rich, there is no compatibility with them. Anand Patil's life is like, "Both husband and wife enjoyed each other's company and troubled each other like teenagers." (Murty 49). Whereas coming to Venkatesh, "they lived, worked and went out together- it was mechanical." (50)

In defiance of his mother's wishes, Setu Madhav Rao married Bhagirathi. His mother Champakka was so obsessed with money, silver, gold, and diamonds that she compelled Setu Madhav Rao to divorce Bhagirathi and married another girl only two months after their wedding. Setu Madhav Rao and his mother were said to have died in a train crash between Bombay and Pune. and Champakka created a plot to spread the news. Bhagirathi was left with a child and the solitude of lifelong marital conflict for the following years of her life. Only because of his mother's order, Venkatesh's father too left Bhagirathi pregnant. This is an injustice to her and the whole females. The patriarchal society has given a lot and lots of misery to the mother. The people around her blamed and cursed that she was not pure. It is only because of her big stomach she has. She decided to commit suicide, but couldn't. it is only because of her son Shankar. She left her native place and lived a poor life alone to bring his son. As she faces injustice by society is only because of Champakka, Venkatesh's mother. "it seemed unbelievable that she had been subjected to so much more injustice, but she was living proof that this was not a story. It was her reality." (79). Bhagavva lost her identity.

It's always a goat that is victimized and not a tiger. A woman is usually meek and humble and that's why Bhagavva suffered the way she did.... Though it is the man's chromosomes that decide the baby's gender, it's the woman who's punished. (87)

Finally, once after discovering the past of his father, Venkatesh thought of helping the family. He found the mystery. "silently, he apologized to her without saying the words out loud, 'please forgive my father, if possible.'" (82) He wants to give some justice that his father didn't do for Bhagavva. But Shantha and her son Ravi don't want to help them. So, Gauri helped his father with money and says that, "let him give fifty lakhs to Bhagavva who has suffered her whole life only because she was unfortunate enough to get married to our grandfather. Imagine her agony!" (108). The story ends with an incomplete note. Whether Bhagavva receive help from him or not?

This depicts that, even in modern times, women sacrifice their lives. And they were the victims in all the things. This was happening since ancient times. Also, both females and males are the victims of the stereotypical and patriarchal society. The enduring impressions and immortal position of the mother in the life of a child and the cruel effects of money jealousy on the conventional social and domestic system are depicted.

**Mukesh:**

Mukesh, who was the adopted son of Krishna Rao and Sumati. When he finds that he was not their birth son. He began to discover the truth behind this. He asks about his biological mother. His adoptive mother Sumati told that Rupinder Kaur is his mother who lives in Amritsar.

Good luck and bad lucks are seen as a major problem in Indian society. That only because of the child, there is a failure in the workshop, that was begun by Rupinder and her brother. He is loyal to his adoptive parents. Rupinder's life is ruined because of her husband Surendar. She was treated as a servant by his husband and mother-in-law. "her mother-in-law is horrible and husband ill-treated her till the day he died...." (172) Woman after marriage was always the suffers in hands of the society even before. She also says about her pain previously. Once she met Nirmala Kumari, that she is pregnant. Rupinder lost her baby during her delivery. She and Anand spent a lot of time together. That results in her pregnancy. Her father is very strict.

“Choudhary did not want anybody to see her or know about the illegitimate child. He decided that it was time to send her somewhere far away for delivery.... I don't care if Nirmala gives birth to boy or a girl. The child should be given away or left there.” (187, 188).

Often women were treated as an object that man can do anything bad, he can, but females shouldn't. Gender stereotypes play well in society. Nirmala felt that she lost her future life because of her father's decision and lost her self-identity. If she thinks about her future, her father will surely kill her and him. She feels that, “My future is not mine at all.” (188). So, she accepts what her father says. She lost her own identity by not doing what she wishes. Finally, she begets a boy and plans to give the baby to Rupinder. At first, Rupinder's family didn't accept the child. Mukesh felt this as a nightmare by hearing the story. And didn't even imagine of he was an illegitimate son. Society doesn't accept illegitimate children.

Finally, he met Sumati and had a conversation. And finally, he left her with a lot of emotions. Only he got her blessings. “I used to think that Karnan and Kunti only existed in the Mahabharata, but now it's happened to me. My blessings and prayers will always be with you.” (202) What matters in end is he never wants his biological mother. Instead, he hugged Sumati and informed her that she is his real mother and she is his real mother and would never let her go and even his sister. He never forgets anything. He is loyal to his mother Sumati. His self is identified by not giving up his adopted mother who cared a lot. Because of the stereotype of the Indian society, every individual suffers as the characters suffer in the novel. mainly victims were women. The self-identity of the two mothers was lost because of their husbands who left them and stereotypical norms in society. That also changed the lives of their sons Venkatesh, Shankar, and Mukesh. Also, the injustice is done to the two mothers in the name of domination is shown.

In these stereotypical and patriarchal society wives are always dominated. But during the modern days, they were emancipated and should live even without their male support. Life must be meaningful to everyone. We self should be identified. Women have to be like the modern and courageous woman like Shanta. Everyone's presence in the world must be useful to oneself or others like Venkatesh.

Venkatesh's wife earns a lot and he earns his father's property too. He doesn't give up working for himself. This shows he seeks self-identity. Though he lost his identity as a husband. But achieved as a good human. Finally, justice by all mothers was done to their children even they were suffered a lot. “Giving birth is simply a biological event but parents must move mountains to raise a child to be a good human being. I salute the mother who made you what you are.” (202)

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