

SUDHA MURTY.... A COACH FROM CHILDHOOD

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Sudha Murty, born 19 August 1950 is an Indian educator, novelist, and humanitarian. She is the Founder-Chairperson of the non-profit charitable organization Infosys Foundation. She is married to the co-founder of Infosys, N. R. Narayana Murthy. Murty was nominated as Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha on 8 March 2024 for her contribution to social work and education. Murty was awarded the Padma Shri, the fourth highest civilian award in India, for social work by the Government of India in 2006. In 2023, she was awarded the Padma Bhushan, the third highest civilian award in India. Sudha Murty began her professional career in computer science and engineering. She is a member of the public health care initiatives of the Gates Foundation. She has founded several orphanages, participated in rural development efforts, supported the movement to provide all Karnataka government schools with computer and library facilities, and established Murty Classical Library of India at Harvard University.

Murty is best known for her philanthropy and her contribution to literature in Kannada and English. Dollar Bahu (lit. 'Dollar Daughter-in-Law'), a novel originally authored by her in Kannada and later translated into English as Dollar Bahu, was adapted as a televised dramatic series by Zee TV in 2001. Runa (lit. 'Debt'), a story by Sudha Murty was adapted as a Marathi film, Pitruroon by director Nitish Bhardwaj. Sudha Murty has also acted in the film as well as a Kannada film Prarthana..

Received: 25/03/2026

Revised: 06/05/2026

Acceptance: 13/05/2026

Publication: 20/05/2026

Early life and education

Sudha Murty was born to a Kannada-speaking family on 19 August 1950 in Shiggaon, Haveri district in Mysore State (present-day Karnataka), India, the daughter of R. H. Kulkarni, a surgeon, and his wife Vimala Kulkarni, a school teacher. She was raised by her parents and maternal grandparents. These childhood experiences form the historical basis for her first notable work entitled *How I Taught My Grandmother to Read, Wise and Otherwise and Other Stories*. Murty completed a B.Eng in Electrical and Electronics Engineering from the B.V.B. College of Engineering & Technology (now known as KLE Technological University), and then a MEng in Computer Science from the Indian Institute of Science.

Career

Sudha Murty became the first female engineer hired at India's largest auto manufacturer TATA Engineering and Locomotive Company (TELCO). She joined the company as a Development Engineer in Pune and then worked in Mumbai and Jamshedpur as well. She had written a postcard to the company's Chairman complaining of the "men only" gender bias at TELCO. As a result, she was granted a special interview and hired immediately. She later joined Walchand Group of Industries at Pune as Senior Systems Analyst.

In 1996, she started Infosys Foundation and retired in 2020. She also taught at Christ University.

Sudha Murty has written and published many books which include novels, non-fiction, travelogues, technical books, and memoirs. Her books have been translated into all major Indian languages. She was a columnist for English and Kannada newspapers.

Philanthropy

Sudha Murty's Infosys Foundation is a public charitable trust founded in 1996.

Personal life

Sudha Murty is married to Infosys co-founder N. R. Narayana Murthy. They married when she was employed as an engineer at TELCO in Pune. The couple have two children, including fashion designer Akshata Murty, who is married to former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom Rishi Sunak, and Rohan Murty, a computer scientist and founder of enterprise software company Soroco.

Her siblings include Dr. Sunanda Kulkarni, Caltech astrophysicist Shrinivas Kulkarni and Jaishree Deshpande (wife of Gururaj Deshpande) who co-founded the Deshpande Center for Technological Innovation at MIT.

Awards

Droupadi Murmu presented the Padma Bhushan Award to Dr. (Smt.) Sudha Murthy and A. P. J. Abdul Kalam presented the Padma Shri Award to Dr. (Smt.) Sudha Murthy.

Other Award

- 2004: Raja-Lakshmi Award by Sri Raja-Lakshmi Foundation in Chennai
- 2006: India's fourth highest civilian award Padma Shri
- 2006: She also received the R.K. Narayana's Award for Literature.
- 2010: Daana Chintamani Attimabbe Award by Karnataka Government.
- 2011: Murty was conferred honorary LL.D (Doctor of Laws) degrees for contributions to promote formal legal education and scholarship in India.
- 2013: Basava Shree-2013 Award was presented to Narayan Murthy & Sudha Murthy for their contributions to society.
- 2018: Murty received the Crossword Book award in popular (Non-Fiction) category.
- 2019: IIT Kanpur awarded her Honorary Degree (*Honoris Causa*) of Doctor of Science.
- 2023: Padma Bhushan by the Government of India
- 2023: Sahitya Akademi Bal Sahitya Puraskar.
- 2023: The Global Indian Award, which is worth \$50,000, is given each year to a prominent Indian who has made a major mark in his or her chosen field. Her husband Narayana Murthy too got the same award in 2014, so they became first couple conferred with this award. She donated the sum to the Field Institute (University of Toronto).

overview of "How I Taught my grandmother to Read" by Sudha Murty

"How I Taught My Grandmother to Read" by Sudha Murty is a touching story that travels the theme of education and the rank of knowledge and education at any age. The narrative follows the journey of a young girl who, in spite of her own illiteracy, turns out to be a teacher to her grandmother, Krishtakka, who is determined to learn to read. The story is set in a village in North Karnataka and highlights the deep emotional bond between the grandmother and granddaughter. The grandmother's wish to read the Kannada novel "Kashi Yatre" becomes a superior ritual, and her inability to read due to her illiteracy leads to a reflective realization of her necessity on others. The story ultimately conveys that education is a lifelong expedition, and with willpower and hard work, one can attain their goal, nevertheless of age.

Key Words/Aspects of the Story:

- **The Motivation:** The grandmother, Krishtakka, lives in a rural village and is illiterate. She eagerly follows the story *Kashi Yatre* in the weekly magazine *Karmaveera*, which she gets read to her by her granddaughter.
- **The Turning Point:** While Sudha is away, a crisis occurs where the grandmother cannot read the magazine and feels helpless. She decides to learn to read, setting a goal for the festival of Dussehra.
- **The Learning Process:** Despite her age, she displays immense dedication and hard work, practicing reading and writing with her granddaughter's help.
- **The Result:** On Dussehra, she reads the novel independently, showing that with willpower, one can overcome obstacles.
- **Theme:** The story focuses on the themes of education, determination, and the deep emotional bond between generations.

Ultimately, the grandmother treats her granddaughter as a teacher, showcasing a profound respect for education. Krishtakka, the 62-year-old grandmother in "How I Taught My Grandmother to Read," is a determined, resilient, and humble protagonist who proves that age is no barrier to learning. She displays immense courage in overcoming illiteracy, showcasing strong willpower, dedication, and a deep respect for education and teachers.

Remarkable Points and Characteristics of Krishtakka:

- **Extraordinary Determination:** Despite being 62, she decided to learn the Kannada alphabet, overcoming the mental barrier of her age.
- **Disciplined and Hardworking:** She practiced reading and writing regularly, completing all her lessons with great effort.
- **Respectful and Humble:** She respected her young granddaughter as her teacher, going so far as to touch her feet, demonstrating a high regard for knowledge over social stature.
- **Independent Mindset:** She felt regret at being unable to read independently and decided to change her situation, valuing self-reliance.
- **Resilient in Adversity:** She overcame her past, where she had no opportunity to go to school, and successfully learned to read within a short period.

Her character symbolizes that with true determination and hard work, one can achieve anything regardless of age or circumstances.

Coach or Instructor of her grandmother***The Young Girl***

How I Taught My Grandmother to Read, the young narrator (Sudha) is portrayed as an affectionate, patient, and diligent 12-year-old who turns into a committed teacher. She is responsible, loving, and dedicated to empowering her 62-year-old grandmother by teaching her the Kannada alphabet, ultimately forging a deeper bond.

Key Positive Attributes of the Young Girl (Sudha):

- **Affectionate and Loving:** She shares a close, tender bond with her grandmother and spends time reading stories from the magazine *Karmaveera* to her.
- **Patient and Dedicated Teacher:** She willingly accepts the challenge to teach her grandmother to read. She acts as a teacher, setting a deadline for success and teaching diligently until the grandmother learns to read independently.
- **Encouraging and Helpful:** She recognizes her grandmother's eagerness to learn and supports her desire for independence.
- **Respectful and Mature:** Although she is young and the teacher, she understands the deep traditional respect owed to elders, highlighted when she accepts her grandmother's reverence for her role as a teacher.

The story portrays her not just as a grandchild, but as an empoweree who helps her grandmother overcome the constraints of illiteracy and age.

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