

STUDY OF ATTACHMENT THEORY IN SUDHA MURTHY'S THE MOTHER I NEVER KNEW

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ABSTRACT

*The introduction traces the plot of the protagonist named Mukesh. This remains to be the second novella out of two in the novel *The Mother I Never Knew* which was written by the author Sudha Murthy. The author has highlighted the significance of emotional attachment by the younger adults towards the aging parents. The youngsters these days should handle the older adults with care and respect instead of neglecting them is elucidated in this story. The protagonist, who is referred as Munna in the text is brought up by the parents Sumati and Rao Saheb and lives abroad with his wife when the plot begins. Later he visits India when his father's demise news reaches him. The story takes sudden twist and turn when a mysterious child photograph of him being with his sister is found. This gives way to an entirely new unknown flashback. He comes to know that he is not the biological son of Sumati and Saheb. Later which he goes in search of his biological parents with a hope of meeting them at least for once which will be a answer to his million questions. The Attachment theory is applied to the plot in order to demonstrate the emotional attachment between the parents and the children. The paper also narrates how theory applied explains about the expectations that arise out of the attachment one share with each other. It also explains the complex situations that arise out of different bond and relationships shared by the characters in the plot. The concept of how Geriatrics is narrated in the novel by the author is also analyzed in this paper.*

Keyword : *Sudha Murthy, The Mother I Never Knew, Attachment Theory, Geriatrics*

INTRODUCTION:

The author Sudha Murthy in her book, '*The Mother I Never Knew*' has comprised two novellas. In the second novella she speaks about the protagonist named Mukesh, a young man, who is shocked to know that he was actually adopted. He comes to know about this fact soon after his father's demise. Then he decides to find out who his real mother is and sets out. More he excavates the past more he gets confused about where to keep his loyalties. He sways between the mother who has given him birth and to the one who has brought him.

GERIATRICS IN THE NOVEL:

The story begins with searching of a document which leads to a suspicious photograph of the protagonist Mukesh and his sister sitting together. When it was probed deeper details, the truth gets revealed. It is only now Mukesh who is also referred as Munna in the text, hears from his mother that he was an adopted son. This traumatizes him further as he is still under distress of his father's loss.

Munna pleads his mother for more details and asks her why the truth was hidden from him all these years. Sumati, his mother explains how they loved Munna and has brought him up like their own blood. And even at times when Munna's father Saheb felt like revealing the truth she has forbidden him from doing so as she was feared about the thought of parting him. She was afraid in letting him to know the truth as she has heard of many children leaving their parents who adopted them for their biological ones.

A mother's insecure feeling which is getting reflected can be viewed from the perspective of Gerontology. The study of Geriatrics is known as the Gerontology. She also prevents her husband from revealing the truth to Munna as she was scared that he will leave them for his biological parents. As far as the attachment theory is applied into this plot, it is notably evident that Sumati and her husband accepted Munna as their own son and brings him up so well along with their daughter. They bring him up without showing any disparity between both children.

This shows how they developed an attachment and eternal bond towards Munna. According to the theory the attachment need not be a reciprocal one. The attachment between the parents and children is a universal one across various global cultures. Moreover, when Sumati's husband Rao Saheb passes away he leaves much of his fortunes to his son who is actually not of his own blood. This in turn shows how real the love and affection was true towards Munna. And when Munna asks Sumati for details regarding about how they have found him either in an orphanage or in a dustbin, the reply from her makes Munna to takes away his breath for a second.

'Amma, where did you find me – in an orphanage or in a dustbin?'

Sumati shook her head, 'No, not from an orphanage, beta. Neither did we find you in a dustbin. Your mother gave you to me.'

'Who is she? And where is she?'

'Her name is Rupinder Kaur and she lives in Amritsar.'

'Amma, why did she give me away? Am I a sardar?'

She sighed, 'It's a long story.' (143)

From the above conversations, the frustrations of Munna and his curiosity to know about his past can be noticed. He asks many questions to Sumati. He becomes so restless to know about his own biological parents who were so mean to give up on him so easily. The theory of attachment can be applied to his biological parents as well. It is because according to the theory the attachment behavior towards the child should be sensitive and appropriate. But in this case the parents appear to be selfish and heartless to give away their child to someone else so easily..

THEROY OF ATTACHMENT:

The Attachment theory was proposed by John Bowlby, a psychiatrist and was published as a seminal work in the year 1958. He is a child psychiatrist who worked in a Child Guidance Clinic in London. He treated many emotionally disturbed children which in turn helped him to understand the child psychology better. He was able to understand the significance of the mother and child relationship and the impact it creates in the child's development

both psychologically and physiologically. He formulated the Attachment theory based on how the early separations of mother and infant might affect a child emotionally.

In this plot, it shows how the biological parents were not bothered about how their son's psychology and emotions as a small kid will affect him. As the plot proceeds it is again understood that the protagonist was handed over twice by the biological mother and the parents who had him for two years to Sumati and Rao Saheb. As an infant he was mishandled without any mercy and was given up by his parents so easily. His heart breaks when he comes to know that he was actually not born out of a wedlock and his entry to the world was an unwelcomed by his parents.

As the plot proceeds further, Sumati recounts on the past and explains to Mukesh about how she and her husband acquired Mukesh from their biological parents. Sumati says that Mukesh's biological family who were pretty well off comparatively, considered him as a bad luck to their family and business except his biological mother. Both families remain neighbours for a small period and develop a mutual bonding. Rupinder, Mukesh's biological mother becomes friendly with Sumati and it is now when both Neeru (Sumati's biological daughter) and Munna becomes friends when they were too small kids.

Then eventually, Rupinder vents out how her mother in law and her husband ill-treats her and considers her son as a bad omen for their family as he got a dark patch on his right foot. Later, Rupinder's family decides to leave for Amritsar to start a new business. And now the mother in law forces Rupinder to hand over the kid Munna to either her family or leave him in an orphanage. Her husband remains silent and stands by his mother side and is prepared to leave his son.

This makes Rupinder to fall into agony and is unable to decide what she has to do with her son now. From the perspective of the attachment theory, it is evident that both Rupinder and her husband were not bothered with the impact they are creating on Munna. Instead Mukesh's biological father who is not even bothered about his son on the first hand while his mother Rupinder, is not strong enough to stand for own son against her husband and mother in law.

Rupinder as a young mother who is afraid to raise her voice against her husband and mother in law, is left with no option but to abandon her son. She was confused about where to leave her son and she explains the scenario to Sumati. After a joint decision, Sumati and her husband who were in fond of Munna, decides to adopt him.

CONCLUSION:

In the current scenario, when youngsters neglect their aging parents and do not give proper care and respect, this plot stands apart. The author brings out the essence of harmony in having bonds together and how a little attention towards them really matters. The child in the novel expresses the attachment behavior towards his parents. He feels the attachment though he knows that he was abandoned by them when he was a kid. He goes in search of them in a hope of meeting them at least once in his lifetime.

As far as the protagonist of this plot is concerned, Mukesh remains affectionate and considerate towards his parents. And when he comes to know about his biological mother he cares for her too and wants to meet her once at least. Though he says that it is out of curiosity that he wants to meet her, it is evident that why he wants to see her. So it can also be taken in a way that still few people like Mukesh exists where they show concern and love for their aging parents.

Finally he meets his mother Sumati and tells the entire story to her, Neeru and his wife Vasanti. And all the four plans to keep that as a secret for the lifetime. This is where the attachment theory can be brought into as Rupinder and Nirmala as well were helpless though at different scenarios but both remained unattached from the kid they own.