



## IMPACT OF MONEY ON HUMAN RELATIONS IN SUDHA MURTHY'S HOUSE OF CARDS

-Dr.Gollapudy Varalaxmi, Asst prof of English, SR&BGNR Govt Arts & science College(A),  
Khammam,Telangana

**Abstract:** Money plays a vital role in the life of man in all walks of life. Infact we can say that without it, not even a day can be spent. No doubt we have to face many hardships to earn it. Many people spend their life time in the acquisition of it. They even are not ablet o realize that life is short and that they have to enjoy with their family only when they are young. Once they become old, diseases may crop up and they may not be able to move even from their home. If you repent in those times, you can gain nothing. As the saying goes, "Make the hay while the sun shines", we have to enjoy only when we are healthy and young. Otherwise, Time and tide wait for none. In the present novel House of Cards,Dr. Sanjay spends most of his time in the acquisition of money. He sets aside the values of faith, confidence, and trust that his wife Mridula has towards him. The paper studies in depth, the loss incurred and the values lost by him. It also studies about the loss of his family due to his ego, which is the aftermath of the acquisition of wealth.

**(Key words:** vital, hardships, acquisition, faith, confidence, ego, trust, values, aftermath)

**Introduction:** Ms. Sudha Murthy is a contemporary Indian writer in English, Kannada and Marathi. She along with Sri. Narayana Murthy is the co- founder of Infosys foundation. She has written travelogues, short –stories, novels, non-fictional pieces and novels and books for children. She is one of the greatest philanthropists of India in the modern days. She has received many awards which include Padma Shri from the Government of India, R.K.Narayan award for Literature, Best teacher from the government of Karnataka, Attimbe award from the Govt. Of Karnataka etc. Her important novels include Three thousand stitches, Mahaswetha, Dollar Bahu etc. The present novel, House of Cards was first written in Kannada in the name of Paridhi in2003 which was translated into English in 2013.

Mridula is the daughter of Bheemanna and Rukmini. Her father was rich and owned a lot of fertile land which was their main source of income in their native village of Aladihalli. He also owned large ancestral house. Apart from Mridula, he had a son named Krishna. He named his daughter so as it is uncommon in that part of Karnataka. As her name suggests, Mridula is innocent, simple and affectionate. She is the beloved of her father She always used to tell her villagers:

‘I am Amma’s girl and Appa’s World’.

Her father has given her freedom to study as per her wishes. She completes her schooling with a state rank. She comes out of her degree course with flying colours. She then completes her teacher’s training course in

Hubli. After the completion of the course, she secures the job of a government teacher In her native, Aladihalli. She also learns medicine and uses it to treat her villagers.

Dr. Sanjay is an introvert. He is passionate about his profession. He used to dedicate himself to it. He used to work in KEM hospital in Bombay. He is looked after by his mother, Ratnamma after the death of his father. Ratnamma did money-lending business to look after children. She gets her daughter married and gives good education to her son, Sanjay. Dr. Sanjay runs into Mridula when he attends a wedding ceremony. He is captivated by her charms and intelligence in his first encounter with her. He meets her for the second time during her visit to Bombay along with her friends when she falls sick and needs medical treatment. He then decides to ask for her hand but he is not confident enough whether his dreams would materialize as he belongs to a marginalized family. Added to the misery, he is a differently abled man, with a short hand. But then he feels that they belong to the same community and speak the same language and hence her parents may not reject him. He also feels that they both can work and have good living. He proposes to Mridula through a letter.

Mridula is raised to believe that one shouldn't question elders when they take a decision. She silently hands over the letter of Dr. Sanjay to her brother and leave the decision to her parents. Her father always used to tell her:

"You should always be open, don't hide. Hiding is a sin."

Her brother Krishna and his wife, Vatsala are against her getting married to a differently abled man. At this moment, Mridula openly speaks up to her family expressing her opinion of marriage in her own terms:

"I don't mind marrying a man with less money. I can also work. But the boy should be good-natured." Even Ratnamma, the mother of Dr. Sanjay doesn't say anything against the proposal. Thus, they get into a wedlock with the blessings of both the families.

Mridula and Sanjay shift to Bangalore after their marriage. Dr. Sanjay works in Victoria hospital. Mridula works in Yelahanka school. They rent a house nearby. As the income of Sanjay is meagre, the house is run on the income of Mridula. She used to have cordial relationship with Muniyappa, the principal of the school and Kantamma, his wife. Bheemanna used to get lots of groceries to her with which the family used to smoothly, though Sanjay never liked his father-in-law doing so

Sanjay plans to do his post-graduation after which he wanted to secure a government job and teach in a medical college. He takes admission in Vani Vilas hospital in Bangalore and studies Gynaecology. He is awarded scholarship. But his main source of income is Mridula's salary. In four years, he completes his PG and starts working as a doctor and a lecturer in a government hospital. Even Mridula's salary increases. They purchase a flat with the loan from a bank. They also are blessed with a male-child, Sushir. Mridula takes the help of Kantamma, the wife of Muniyappa, the principal, in taking care of her child, while on her job.

Sanjay's friend, Dr. Alex gets married to his fiancé, Anitha. He goes to middle east and earns adequate amount to start a hospital of his own. Dr. Sanjay continues to be philanthropic in treating his patients. Dr. Alex advises him to contribute a part of his income towards such activities:

"Along with talent, strong sense of practicality is essential. There's nothing wrong in earning more money. If you want to help people, keep aside a percentage of your earnings for philanthropy or treat some people for free".

Dr. Sanjay is also reminded of Dr. Alex's words about the system:

“It is better to get out of the system and fight than stay in the system and struggle. He makes an effort to make him think rationally on his stand as a doctor in a government hospital.”

Mridula becomes the principal of Vijayanagar high school. With the help of her parents and her income, Dr Sanjay is able to construct a hospital with the partnership of Dr. Alex, Sushruta Nursing home. Dr. Sanjay's income increases in leaps and bounds. They construct a new house with four bedrooms and maintain three cars too. Mridula is happy that her husband has risen to great heights with her support. She understood that money has brought lot of comforts into their lives. But she has never thought of the difficulties and changes that has come with it. Sanjay feels uncomfortable at Mridula's profession and meagre salary that she draws. He humiliates her:

“Mridula, do you still work? I spend more money than you earn on our cars, cook and driver. If you stay at home, it will be cheaper for us.”

Mridula understands that Sanjay has turned egoistic. His humiliation hurts her a lot. She is not able to digest the fact that he has forgotten all the sufferings and sacrifices that she has undergone, to keep him in that position. Had she not supported him till then, he wouldn't even have had a good meal, many days. Infant, her income is the light that has given light to the entire house. Sanjay's dream of having a hospital of his own wouldn't have materialized, if her parents wouldn't have rendered a helping hand in it. She decides never to quit such bread-earning profession which has shaped her family. She says:

“That's impossible. You were able to start the hospital because of my salary. My pay has helped me in our difficult times and I enjoy and respect my work. I will never leave it. It is oxygen to me and not just a source of income.”

Sanjay asks Mridula to meet a psychiatrist when she tells him about his sister Lakshmi spending lumpsum amount on her jewelry. At this, she understands that there is an intense vacuum in her life and that she has no place for her in the huge nursing home and the big house of hers. She feels that her son too has turned against her and she is unable to raise him as per her wishes. Sanjay feels that she is irritated and she disagrees with him in all respects. He turns egoistic and feels that Mridula in turn disrespects him and that she can never get a husband like him.

In any relationship, it is compassion that binds people together. A successful person dominates others and people obey him only to keep the peace. Sanjay feels himself to be successful but forgets the fact that behind his success, there lies the hands of his beautiful wife, Mridula. In turn, he humiliates her.

Mridula is forced to open the cupboard of the room of her husband in the hospital to procure a file, in his absence. While doing so, she finds the documents of a joint account of her husband with her sister-in-law, Lakshmi. She also finds that Sanjay has given ten lakhs to his mother and has gifted his nephew with a costly car. Mridula is taken aback. She has lost all the trust she had on her husband. She feels that he has deceived her in all respects. At this point, her confidence on him fell like the house of cards. She couldn't control herself. Yet, she maintains her balance of mind and hands over the keys to him. Sanjay understands the reason for her silence but he is egoistic in his own way-

“Why should I tell her everything? I have the right to do everything with my money”.

Mridula feels miserable at the breach of trust and confidence that she has on her husband. She says to Anitha,



“It is not about money. Money can be earned and lost. It is about faith that a wife has in her husband. That’s more valuable than money and gold. Faith sustains a marriage and brings joy to the family. How can Sanjay destroy faith and trust I had in him?”

She learns from Satish, her friend that he shares everything with his wife and that they are contented with each other. A contented person distributes happiness whereas an unsatisfied person distributes restlessness. She even finds that her own son Sishir comparing her to a broken record, repeating the same, again and again. At this point, she feels that she is unwanted by both her husband and her son. She feels miserable. Under the guidance of her student Vani, she visits a psychiatrist, Dr. Rao.

Dr. Rao advises her that softness is essential for a happy life. He also informs her that she should have been a little practical, to avoid a few difficulties. After studying her, Dr. Rao informs her that though Sanjay is good money has made him egoistic. It made him superior and that he is still believing to be a dominating partner. He informs her that none can him, but he himself can do so.

Mridula decides to lead the life of her own, as per her wishes-

“I have to live my life on my terms if I want to be happy. He ridicules and dominates me and it affects my confidence terribly.”

She speaks to Sanjay:

“I have spent 25 of my most important years with you and yet I never felt I belonged to you or your family. I am still an outsider.” she felt that her duty towards her family is over as a wife, mother and a daughter-in-law. She decides to live the rest of her life for herself, her school and her village. She uses her parents' money that they had gifted her for the hospital, to repair the school. She gets transferred to that school. she rents a house in her village, Aladihalli, as she never liked to be a burden to her parents.

Two months after the departure of his wife, Sanjay feels the vacuum in his life. He feels that he is similar to a beggar and that no amount of riches or buildings can fill her gap. He felt that he could buy anything with money, but, with all his riches, he felt like a beggar. For the first time, he felt that he had lost something valuable (Mridula). And that there is much emptiness without her. He approaches her finally, in order to rectify himself and bring her back.

Money has played a vital role in determining human relations. Mridula is from an economically well-to-do family. She is duty minded, obedient and earns respect from all the members of the society. She has never craved for money. She is a woman of human values. It is these values which have won her laurels wherever she is. Dr.Sanjay is from an economically poor background. That is the reason why he turned egoistic, when his riches increased in leaps and bounds. He feels that money alone can gain relationships. But he forgets the fact that a true relationship between a wife and a husband is based on trust, compassion, confidence and mutual cooperation. These are the four walls on which the bond of marriage is built. Any deviation in any of these values would demolish the house itself.the loss of faith of Mridula on Sanjay shook the roots of the bond of family and it fell like the “House of Cards”.Faith and trust is the water in the construction of a family. If it turns dry, the land itself would break and turn barren.

Money makes many things, but not all the things. Money cannot buy happiness. With money, we get innumerable friends. We shouldn’t forget that when these riches are done away do, we find a true friend. In Sumati Shataka of Telugu, the poet says that friends are like frogs that are seen in a river with much water. When the water dries up, you hardly find any of them. money comes and goes but Morality comes and grows. “Each partner must keep I mind that most relationships aren’t destroyed by one dramatic act, but a

series of small, even individually inconsequential acts that chip away at your foundation of love and trust” - says Mindy Crary.

**Conclusion:** The best thing to spend on relationships is –time, conversation, understanding and honesty. The wrong relationships teach you how to recognize the right one when it arrives. A strong relationship requires choosing to love each other, even in the moments, when you struggle to like each other.

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