



Research Paper

## The Streak of Financial Management in the character of Ratnamma in the novel 'House of Cards' by Mrs. Sudha Murty

Dr. Varsha Gawande<sub>1</sub> Rajashree Deshmukh<sub>2</sub>

*<sub>1</sub>Head of the Department, English, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Mahavidyalaya Amravati*

*<sub>2</sub>Research Scholar at Babasaheb Ambedkar Mahavidyalaya Amravati, SGBAU*

**Abstract:** The present research paper aims to study the trait of financial management in the character of Ratnamma in the novel 'House of Cards' penned by Mrs. Sudha Murty.

Financial planning and management is supposed to be an asset of high profile stalwarts in the Universities and Management Schools. The unpredictability of future, the change of market conditions and the readiness to see profit and loss behind every action are certainly the personality traits of financial gurus who are well versed in the game of economics and finance.

The dynamic character of **Ratnamma** in the selected novel defies all these rules and she emerges as a strong, wise and mature **Financial Manager** without the benefits of formal schooling, education and training. She is trained in the school of life and strengthened by the blows of circumstances that are an integral part of middle class existence in India.

This paper delineates the challenging journey of Ratnamma and studies the dominance of the trait of financial management in her actions and reactions in everyday life. In the various roles as wife, mother, grandmother, mother in law, and entrepreneur, **monetary considerations** always take an upper hand over the transient pleasures of this materialistic world. 'Every penny saved today will help you for a rainy day' is her motto. Right decision making, asserting oneself and emotional intelligence are exhibited in the personality of Ratnamma and that gives her a respectable life in society. From a nonentity she rises to become the Chairman of the Women's Cooperative Bank in the village. **Financial management** is an important aspect in the process of **women's empowerment**.

**Key Words:** Financial Management, Financial Emergencies, Women's Empowerment

Received 09 Apr., 2024; Revised 19 Apr., 2024; Accepted 21 Apr., 2024 © The author(s) 2024.

Published with open access at [www.questjournals.org](http://www.questjournals.org)

### I. Introduction:

'House of Cards' is an interesting and thought provoking novel on the strength and weakness of human relationships. It is written by the celebrated writer Mrs. Sudha Murty.

The renowned writer Mrs Sudha Murty has highlighted the importance of financial independence for every woman, young or old; educated or illiterate. Through the character of Ratnamma, Mrs Sudha Murty has portrayed the struggle in the life of a middle class woman and her efforts to create an **authentic existence** out of the circumstances that life throws at her. Women ,at any stage of her life should be emotionally strong, physically fit to carry out her daily chores and financially independent so that life doesn't become a tale of silent suffering and meek submission. The character sketch of Ratnamma highlights the strength and tenacity in her efforts to face life boldly.

### Character sketch of Ratnamma

Ratnamma stays at T. Narsipura ,a famous pilgrimage town in Mysore and represents the older generation. A 58 years old widow, the ups and downs of circumstances have taught her the lessons of financial security and economic independence .

She runs a small shop in front of the Narasimha temple and sells "flowers, incense, camphor,bananas,coconuts and other puja items". She understands the needs of the visiting pilgrims and provides them required puja items on special auspicious days as Narasimha Chaturthi.

Ratnamma had two small children and a somewhat irresponsible husband like Narasinga Rao. He practiced medicine in the village but did not charge people for the medicines. Everyone in the village took undue advantage of this trait in Narasinga Rao. He considered it as Lord Dhanvantari's gift to him and feared that if he starts charging money for his service, this gift will disappear. Therefore Ratnamma was concerned about running the household with such a gullible husband. With this frustrating partnership, Ratnamma decides to fend for herself and her two kids and starts her small shop and money lending business. This decision launches her on her **journey of thousand miles**.

She feels that, ' *if all men are like Narasinga Rao, the wife's life is difficult.*' Initially she looks after the farms and land and understands the nuances and tricks of the trade. With no formal education, she manages to run a money lending business tactfully, at times becoming ruthless and shrewd with her local customers. People call her " *a hard hearted lady*". She is emotionally strong and independent and therefore local gossip does not affect her peace of mind.

*" Am I not giving them money when they need it? They know the terms. Why should they get upset when I ask them to return it? Why was Karna of the Mahabharata called great? Because he gave away money and things to everybody. If I start lending money with a low interest rate, there will be a big queue in front of my house. And if I stop asking people to return the money, then they will either take very long or they may not return it. My business will go down the drain. People will always talk. If they want free money, then I am not the right person to approach."*

This shows how well she understands the ways of the world! She is well versed in human psychology and financial management as well. She knows how people around you behave when they need you and the difference in behavior when their need is over. She is not swayed by emotions or feelings but is rigid in her approach when it comes to money matters.

Ratnamma is unperturbed by such loose talks of selfish and opportunistic villagers. Her world centre's around money, profit and loss calculations and she uses her time only for herself and her moneymaking ventures. She is calm but stoic as life has acquainted her with all hues and shades of darkness.

She never offers tea to anyone; she never closes her shop and therefore does not participate in any family gatherings and functions. She saves every penny fearing a rainy day is ahead and lives a very frugal life without any expenses. She does not give any gifts to anyone on birthdays or family functions as she feels it as a waste of money and justifies her stand by saying that blessings are more important than money. She detests her daughter's habit of spending money when she prepares moresavories during lunch. She even instructs her son in law to save money for future emergencies but he retorts impolitely: " *Mother in law, we will be able to save even more if we just stop breathing.*"

When her son gives her an option to close the shop and stay at home comfortably, she sees through his plan and understands that he doesn't want her to run a small shop as it is below his dignity. She is worldly wise and is straightforward in her views: " *I don't worry about such false status symbols.*"

She regards all her customers who come to her shop as God and over the years has come to understand even the difficult customer too. She appreciates the importance of ' *money, customers and business*' and therefore deals with all types of people with patience and tact. Every customer who visits her shop is precious for her, she can't afford to ignore them or be rude to them.

*'If you are running a business, then don't become too friendly with anyone because inevitably, they will ask you for a loan. Once people become friends, it is difficult to ask them to return the money. You will lose the money and the friendship.'* She has a fine demarcation between the rules of business and friendship.

She has good knowledge of psychology and feels " *when daughters grow up, they become good friends to mothers but when young boys grow up, they become strangers.*" When her son Dr. Sanjay gets married and visits T.Narasipura with his wife for the first time, Ratnamma cautions Mridula about money and its importance in the hour of crisis. Her advice to her new daughter in law shows her concern for being prepared for financial emergencies , " *We don't know when we will have to face difficult times. Life's good when we have money. People will be friends with us. But when we don't have money , nobody will help us. So try to save some money from your salary. I can't tell Sanjay this but I can share this with you.*"

When Sanjay and Mridula [Ratnamma's son and daughterin law] visit a temple in T Narasipura for the first time, Mridula gives ten rupees and betel leaves to all the married ladies in the temple and does namaskara to them to seek their blessings. This weird news reaches Ratnamma quickly and she feels uncomfortable with this gesture of her new daughter in law. She feels " *What does Mridula know what the values of ten rupees is? Blessings are not proportional to money. If blessings had that power, then the world would have been different.*"

*" If Mridula believes that blessings from such women are important, then I don't mind if she touches their feet, but she should not give them money. If the woman of the house is a spendthrift, then what will my son's future be?"*As she has seen hard days , she feels it wise to be prepared for unforeseen dangers on the way.

She doesn't approve of the lavish lifestyle of her daughter and son in law and tries to counsel them every time. What the new generation considers as a necessity, Ratnamma disapproves as a luxury. “ *Shankar wants to show off and Laxmi agrees with him. The truth is that they don't need a phone. But Shankar wants it because his brother Mahadeva has one in Mysore. There's so much competition among the brothers and their wives. The competition should be about who earns more money and not about who spends more. Every week Shankar and Laxmi hire a taxi and go on a short fun trip.*”

Without any formal education or training from any Management School , Ratnamma plays the dice tactfully and proves to be a long distance runner. With the passage of time she becomes the Chairman of the local Women's Cooperative bank in the village and is happy with her work.

## **II. Conclusion:**

Ratnamma is a strong woman of substance who does not waste her time and energy in regret and repentance over her misfortunes but picks up the threads quickly and charts out her way with her resolute courage and common sense. Her concepts about money management are clear, the adamant way in which she follows her principles are superb and finally this strong willed, self willed lady marches confidently to occupy the post of Chairman of the Women's Cooperative bank in the village.

The streak of **financial management** is instrumental in her journey towards success.

## **Reference:**

- [1]. House of Cards, Sudha Murty, Penguin India, 2013.