

# madras

## SPOTLIGHT

### Wise, Not Otherwise!



Sreemathi

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**SUDHA** Murthy, Chairperson, Infosys Foundation, and computer engineer by profession, has many firsts to her credit. That includes making Aamir Khan blush! "You are very handsome," she said to him at a function organised for *Lagaan*. Chuckling about it to a full house of women, members of the *Duchess Club*, she goes on to make another confession. "I love to watch movies," says the lady whose favourite stars include Hrithik Roshan, Madhuri Dixit, Manisha Koirala, Juhi Chawla ... and of course, actress par excellence from our backyard, Suhasini Maniratnam. Sudha graciously hands the bouquet of yellow roses she just received, to the actress, with the words, "I am your fan. I have seen all your Kannada movies."

She shares the story of a Chennai donor, a senior citizen who sent her a cheque for four lakhs with an accompanying note that requested her to disburse the monies for welfare activities as she saw fit. All he wished was anonymity. Sudha, however, wished to repay his generosity and chose Chennai as the launch city for her book *Wise And Otherwise*. "A sign of gratitude to the generous man I don't know," she smiles. The other reason for her Chennai visit is the release of three of her translated works in Tamil.

Sudha is touched by the sensitive readership Tamilnadu offers. "*Wise And Otherwise* has already gone into its second print run here," her eyes widen in surprise. The lady who can barely speak Tamil has been greeted by Tamilians in Singapore, Tokyo, Australia and Japan who have sampled her stories and articles. Abdul Kalam, during his pre-Prez days, called and personally applauded her literary efforts.

The diminutive lady of indomitable strength had her audience spellbound as she fed them tales of simple homespun wisdom. Sudha's confidence and courage of conviction are in evidence in every aspect of her being - from the understated jewellery on her to the grey strands of wisdom that blend unselfconsciously into the knot at the nape of her neck.

She is comfortable dredging up a particularly memorable *Kabhi Kushi Kabhi Gham* number as she describes the lives of slum-dwellers in Orissa, people close to her heart. And therein lies Sudha Murthy's charm. A balanced perspective of life, and all that it means.

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