

Ascendancy of Folk Tales on Children's Cognitive Skills: A Behavioral Perspective

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Abstract

India is a nation rich in cultural diversity. Every culture has a unique way of knowing things. All of India's major languages have seen a significant increase in interest in the gathering, preservation, analysis, and study of folk literature since the country's independence. Every civilization's language and culture are fundamentally shaped by its folk literature. Folk literature, sometimes referred to as oral tradition or folklore, is the customary knowledge and beliefs of non-written societies. This essay demonstrates how folktales affect children's cognitive development. It also looks at the alterations in behaviour that take place. Fairy tales not only aid in a child's growth but also offer a multitude of therapeutic uses. This gives a fantastic way to get into children's imaginations through the investigation of fairy tale recollections and the nonthreatening, entertaining application of these too painful or frightening events. For instance, the struggle between good and evil is a recurring theme in fairy tales all throughout the world.

Keywords: Folk literature, tradition, tales, genres, children, cognitive skills, behaviour transformation.

Introduction

Every civilization's language and culture are fundamentally shaped by its folk literature. Folk literature, sometimes referred to as oral tradition or folklore, is the customary knowledge and beliefs of non-written societies. It is passed down orally and includes stories in prose and poetry, poems and songs, myths, plays, rituals, proverbs, riddles, and similar material. It is similar to written literature. Produced by almost every known people, living or extinct. India is a nation rich in cultural diversity. Each culture has its own knowledge system. All of India's major languages have seen a significant increase in interest in the gathering, preservation, analysis, and study of folk literature since the country's independence. Nonetheless, there isn't much utilization of folk literary resources in the classroom at different educational levels. Folk literature can be an effective teaching tool in the three types of education models—informal, formal, and non-formal—that move from teaching literacy to literature and other topics.

This essay focuses on how an in-depth understanding of folktales reflects principles found in everyday life. By their very essence, folktales emphasize variety. Children can gain important insights about the values, beliefs, history, traditions, and customs of other cultures by reading stories from a variety of cultural perspectives. Folktales helped to enforce expectations about how to live a meaningful life by modelling certain behaviours and passing them down through the generations. Compassion, resourcefulness, bravery, and reliability were progressively weaved into folktale stories over time. Folktales serve as models for the components of sound decision-making as well. Folktale characters

frequently face issues that force them to make tough choices and take decisive action in order to resolve. There are many forms and genres of folktales including: Animal Stories, Epics, Fable, Fairy tales, Legends, Myths, Tall Tales, and Urban Legends.

The 21st century has seen a paradigm shift in the fields of education and curriculum. People's attitudes and preferences have changed, even though science and technology continue to receive the majority of attention. Nowadays, folktales have a big role in literature. Folktales are valuable in children's literature, and people are starting to recognize this since they are morality tales. The values that are transmitted from one generation to the next combine traditional and modern ideals.

The fact that folktales promote child development is one of the main reasons they are significant. Folktales are frequently written to gauge a child's level of initiative. Not only can folk tales support the growth of children, but they also provide a wealth of material for therapeutic applications. Through the exploration of fairy tale memories and the nonthreatening, fun application of these too painful or disturbing circumstances, this offers a terrific approach to access children's imaginations. For example, a common motif in fairy tales worldwide is the conflict between good and evil. This can be understood as internal conflict or the tension between the id and ego from a therapeutic perspective. Internal conflict can affect a lot of kids and teenagers, whether it's because of troubles at home, bullying, or taunting. Through folktales, children can learn to analyse right from wrong and act accordingly. Children all across the world are still enthralled and inspired by Indian folklore, which adds to the appreciation of many storytelling traditions around the world.

Chandamama was one of the earliest publications for children. It was a long running monthly magazine and was published in several Indian languages. Noted Telugu film maker B Nagi Reddy and Chakrapani started the magazine. It was first published in Telugu and Tamil, and appeared as *Ambulimama* in 1947. The name, which means Uncle Moon, harks to a favourite Indian tradition of referring to the moon as the maternal uncle of children. The magazine was published in other Indian languages (Marathi, Malayalam, and Gujarati) before it began English publication in 1955. Soon, *Chandamama* was published in twelve Indian languages and entertained children throughout the nooks and corners of the country.

Many readers found the thought-provoking stories to be immediately engrossing. The tales reflected the issues and conundrums that face kids today, without necessarily trying to convey a moral lesson. Folktales and fairy tales are transmitted verbally from one generation to the next. As a result, the identity of the original writers of various folktales and fairy tales cannot be determined with certainty. These anecdotes and stories were most likely collected by someone and published in manuscript, book, or other format in the present era.

Folktales, fairy tales, and other children's literature constitute the foundation of the research since they are linked to the psychological growth of young readers. Children learn several positive traits and real-world lessons from its stories. Understanding different life difficulties and challenges is made easier by the storylines, moral ideals, and the people of the stories. Youngsters can relate the events and fictional characters to real-world situations, which makes it easier for them to deal with challenges in everyday life. Indian folktales are populated with legendary animals and supernatural entities that lend a magical and enchanting quality. Gods, goddesses, and devils are among the frequently featured figures that either fight epic battles or bestow favours onto mortals. Indian legend is filled with fascinating creatures such as the celestial nymph, the genie, and the magical sorcerer. These creatures are truly amazing.

The crown jewels of Indian children's literature are the Panchatantra, Hitopadesha, Jataka tales, tales of

Tenali Rama, tales of Akbar Birbal, stories of Vikram Betal, folktales, folklore, fairy tales related to Indian mythology and regional works like Thakumar Jhuli in Bengali, Burdi Ayer Xhadhu in Assamese, short stories of Rabindranath Tagore, and Mahadevi Verma. It is widely recognized globally. Many academic institutions and experts from other countries examined and analysed it. It has long been customary for parents to read folktales to their kids in order to inculcate certain moral lessons in them at a young age. The simplest approach to parenting is to insist on values rather than giving them to you straight. Through the characters' narration, they are able to recall the positive aspects of the story with ease. Children can generally recall the folktale characters with ease. From the epic tales of their different religions, such as the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, they can acquire certain divine principles.

With its use of animal characters and realistic circumstances, the Panchatantra's storytelling structure is still widely used in children's novels and fables today. In both collections, animal figures are prevalent and serve as symbols for human traits as well as a reflection of human nature's vices and virtues. The moral lessons and teachings found in both volumes are conveyed through the use of stories. Anthropomorphic animals, ethical quandaries, and metaphorical narratives are common features of both the Jataka Tales and the Panchatantra.

As the brother sets off on a quest to find his sister, the narrative takes on a legendary quality. Along the way, he comes across a number of natural hazards, such as a massive tree, a river, a snake, and a lion. The brother is adamant despite the risks, saying he is headed to meet his sister who is getting ready for Brother's Day. The oral story "Brother's Day" elucidates the man's discourse with the animals, in which the animals express their admiration for the children. They visualize the scenario in order to hone their creative thinking abilities.

“Next he met a snake. The snake said, “I’m going to bite you.” He said, “Don’t bite me now. I’m on my way to see my sister dressed in new clothes for Brother’s Day. After I’ve done that, I’ll return. Then you may bite me.” Then he met a lion, and it said, “Brother, I’m going to eat you.” He said to the lion, “Don’t eat me now. I’m going to see my sister dressed in new clothes on Brother’s Day. When I return, you may eat me.” (BD)

Ramanujan not only entertains but also educates, offering readers a profound understanding of the cultural heritage embedded in this enchanting folk celebration. Children also like hearing about the exciting and occasionally humorous events in the lives of Akbar and Birbal, which makes them excellent bedtime stories with morals. Psychologists, counsellors, and researchers stated that a child's ability to learn is high before going to sleep because it was discovered that whatever we learn before bedtime is adapted faster by the brain (Blake &Maiese, 2008)

Birbal consistently emphasizes wit, intelligence, and occasionally foolishness in his stories. His stories help children strengthen their cognitive thinking skills. Indian folktales have influenced literature in addition to being used in a variety of other media. These stories have been updated for modern audiences through television shows, animated movies, and graphic novels. The stories are given fresh life by these contemporary retellings, which also serve to preserve Indian folklore in the digital age by introducing it to younger audiences. It is therefore more beneficial to teach children positive values like love, courage, honesty, integrity, self-discipline, responsibility, justice, love, mercy, and honesty when they are in preschool rather than when they are in adolescence.

Conclusion

Through the conversations and acts of characters, children are taught life values and negotiation skills.

Through these, the kids will gain knowledge about their own social and cultural values, which will improve the way their emotions and sense of self-worth develop as they consider, question, and decide what to do. They connect and preserve culture, making them a valuable teaching tool. Folktales have an impact on our worldview, transmit values, and fortify the links that bind individuals and communities.

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