

Role of Child Magazines in Emotional Excellence of Children (With Special Emphasis on Assamese Child Magazines)

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Abstract:

Magazines are generally attributed as an excellent medium for progress, upliftment and publicity of literature. Magazines can often be considered as a representative of a particular era as they maintain a distinguished type of literary momentum throughout that very duration. The periphery of the term 'magazine' is very wide and diverse, as it collectively includes theme based publications like literary magazine, science based magazine, child magazine, sports magazine, career related magazine etc. In the expansion of overall Assamese literature, magazine culture has played a historically significant part. The concept of child magazine in Assamese literary circuit started to flourish towards the end of Nineteenth century. From the time of their very origin till date, they have played an immensely important role in providing the intellectual and emotional supplement in children. Literature has always been a special contributor in development of interests and sharpness in children's minds and it often plants the first seed of creativity in children. With gradual mental development, if children can be connected with equivalent level of literature appropriate to their age, it acts as a booster in their emotional and intellectual progress. As magazines incorporate all the elements of literature, a child reading them can taste that diversity which in turn helps in garnering overall excellence in them.

Key words: Child Magazine, Assamese Child Magazine, Literature, Emotional Excellence, Current Scenario

1.0 Introduction:

Child psychology is simple, yet complex. All the elements of this world are sources of never-ending amazement for them. Fantasy is their world of reality and amusement and merrymaking are their habitual activities. Although human civilization has come a long way from the ancient era till this modern age, children's nature and their activities have been the only universal constant throughout this long road. Although child psyche is elementary, it is filled with immense curiousness, which makes the creation of child-suitable literature a rather challenging task.

In all the three eras of Assamese literature: ancient, middle and modern; children literature is created and practiced to a certain extent. Expansion of children literature has been taking place in both written as well as verbal mediums. Various natural elements which readily attract a child, like sun, moon, stars, birds, butterflies, sky etc have always been the centres of literary ideas with children as the target audience. Poems, stories, songs etc which are written for children in simplest form of language generally contain real or fictional tales of rituals and supernaturalism, of valour and heroism, and of age-old proverbs and moral teachings. In the expansion and popularisation of child literature, child magazines and comics

has been playing a pivotal role. A single child magazine includes various sections like stories, tales, poems, puzzles, science writings, question-answers, jokes, translated contents etc and hence it can be considered as a very reliable tool of knowledge accumulation and entertainment for a child. Child magazines published from the time of initiation of modern Assamese literature have a very glorious history. Decades after decades, those magazines are serving the literary needs of children's minds and are helping in rise of literary talents in generations of future writers. This is one of the special aspects of the contributions made by the child magazines.

1.1 Objective of the Research:

The main objectives of this research paper are listed as follows:

- (a) To analyse the importance of literature in intellectual and emotional development of children,
- (b) To discuss the significance and role of magazines as a medium of literature,
- (c) To summarize the past history of child magazines and to deduce their relevance in the current timeline.

1.2 Methodology:

While preparing the research paper, mainly the descriptive method is used with occasional utilisation of analytical method as required.

1.3 Range of the Study:

This research paper aims to summarize the universal importance of child magazines. But for the convenience of this discussion, the history of Assamese child magazines and their relevance in the current context is tried to be analysed here.

2.1 Main Discussion:

If the growth and development of children from their infant stage is noticed, it becomes quite evident that children generally develops their behaviour by following the natural surroundings around them. Within the first year, a child learns to respond with a word or two, and gradually starts to capture the language which he or she keeps hearing from his or her immediate family members. With this language, children learn to construct sentences, to dream and to imagine. A normal child simultaneously learns to capture the language and physically moves from one place to another. Hence while observing the surrounding natural elements by walking or running, children can express their imagination and curious mind. Children get the opportunity to indirectly attach themselves with literature right from their birth. To console the child, the custom of singing lullaby or telling stories by mother or an immediate family member has been in use in our society since ages. The subject matter of these songs or stories are generally filled with animals, sun-moon-stars, various elements of supernatural world etc. When a child learns to identify letters and initiates formal education, then along with development of listening and speaking skills, progress in reading and writing skills also take place. In this context, textbooks generally play the major role. In the period of

linguistic development in children, it is utmost necessary to introduce them to creative literature. Although various tricks have to be deployed to generate and nurture their interests in literature. In doing that, various child magazines and comic books help to a great extent. If one observes the index of a child magazine, it can be seen that the magazine contains a plethora of segments such as poems, stories, pictures, stories through images, moral teachings, science stories, comical essays etc. Although interests vary from child to child, this diverse nature of a child magazine encompasses the variety required for the mental nourishment of each and every child. In addition to the textbook knowledge, when a child develops interest in reading creative literatures, it boosts the gravity of their understanding as well as helps in capturing the multiple skills involved with the process of reading. This also excels the kid's expertise over words and phrases. Besides being introduced with newer wordings, this also helps in learning the use of punctuation marks and intonations. It also enhances a child's command over sentence construction, use of idioms and phrases etc. Similarly, with the vocal reading of poems or rhymes, children get aware of the concept of intonation, thereby developing the artistic nature associated with speaking skills. Various fictional tales incorporated in story books like plants and animals having verbal conversations, people flying in skies using their wings, tales of the fairylands etc act as great source of happiness for children. Connecting these fictional tales with the real world, they often experience the feeling of ecstasy and simultaneously generate a sensation of love for the natural world. Another useful aspect of literature study is the accumulation of knowledge from the moral lessons and advices inherited in various stories. Through these stories, if children can be made familiar with virtues like justice, honesty, helpfulness, humility, brotherhood, friendship etc, it can flourish the moral values and honest behaviours inherently installed inside them. Due to the purest nature of their minds, these moral teachings can easily influence children. Another significant advantage of reading magazines is the nourishment of creativity in children. Moreover when a kid sees poems, prose or paintings of other children getting printed in magazines, it encourages him or her to start writing by himself. These sort of practices ultimately affect the imaginary power or creative prowess of children in positive ways. When children develops the habit of writing, it carry forwards the true literary potential inherited by them. This habit doesn't only benefit a child by developing an interest in creative literature but helps in attaining academic excellence as well. Anyway, proper guidance, co-operation and encouragement of senior family members is utmost necessary in this regards. In some magazines, there exists few columns of translated literature and when a child goes through those contents, he or she obtains the chance to get accustomed to the foreign literary worlds as well. These in turn helps children to get introduced to the foreign literary giants and gives them chances to attain facts and information from those literary cultures.

Besides these regular segments, some magazines publish columns on general knowledge, scientific discussion etc which helps in keeping children's academic interest intact. This also formulates a corollary between fantasies of children's imaginary land and facts and formulas of real world. As a result, simultaneous progress occurred in the field of academics as well alongside the entertainment. To generate interest towards literature, language and expressions used in child literature should mandatorily be of basic level. Also age-suited subject-matters, use of proper wordings, rhyme and melodious presentation etc can easily win children's hearts. These aspects should be seriously considered by the writers while composing child literatures.

With rapid expansion of technology in this third decade of twenty first century, the world is gradually getting converted into a global village. Today's generation is equipped with many modern instruments which give access to the world of entertainment and facts. With irrational availability of smart gadgets like mobile phones, computer, internet sources etc, relationship of human with written literature is experiencing a strain compared to previous time. Naturally, visualisation of a story is preferred over going through it as the former provides more pleasure when compared. Also, a mere google search saves significant amount of time than going through multiple books when one requires to accumulate data on a particular topic. Thus the young generation from this advanced digital age will naturally show affinity towards playing video games or browsing videos in internet platforms rather than reading a book or magazine. Hence the older ones of family have a lot to do to make their kids understand about the benefits and importance of printed letters. In uplifting the intellectual-emotional status in children by nourishing their imaginations, no one can ever deny the importance that paper, magazines, books or comics do have in offer.

2.2 A brief glance at the history of Assamese Child Magazine:

The history of Assamese child magazines can be traced back till the year 1888. '*Larabandhu*', edited by KarunabhiramBarua, is cited as the first ever child magazine of Assam. But this publication did not last long. Later in 1916 another magazine '*Akon*', edited by HemchandraGoswami, was published. This was followed by publication of various magazines in next few years like: '*Moina*' (1923) edited by Raghunath Choudhury, '*Arun*' (1926) edited by MahadebSarmah, '*Pokhila*' (1933) edited by HarendranathSarmah, '*Akon*' (1935) edited by Birinchi Kumar Baruah, '*Rangghor*' (1948), '*Parijat*' (1940) edited by DinanathSarmahetc Other magazines like '*Dipak*', '*Jonbai*', '*Mukuta*'etc also attained immense popularity among the children during that period.

In the later stage, '*Sofura*'(1982) and '*Mouchaq*' (1984) literallybrought new zenith to the field of Assamese child literature. Founding editor of the '*Sofura*' magazine was Dr.BhabendraNathSaikia. From its very beginning, this magazine started different segments by emphasising on the interests and choices of Assamese children and thereby received great acceptance amongst them. At present, RupamBaruah is the editor of this magazine. Alongside publishing various fact-based articles on education, science, literature, sports, and plenty of poems, stories, tales etc, this magazine franchise has been conducting different talent search examinations, summer camps and other competitions also, thereby proving as an inspiring source of knowledge and entertainment for children belonging to different age groups. Similarly, SantanuTamuly edited '*Mouchaq*' magazine has also been very active throughout all these years as a knowledge hub and source of happiness for the youngest section of the society. Few other child magazines published in the decade of eighties are: '*Kokadeuta*', '*Oikyataan*', '*Jnyan-Bijnyan*'etc Similarly, few science-themed magazines which played a pivotal role in garnering scientific temperament in children are: '*BijnyanJeuti*', '*BijnyanSofura*', '*NotunAbishkar*' etc Besides all these magazines, a comic magazine which earned special admiration from children was '*Rongmon*', edited by PranayBordoloi. Children are always attracted towards sketches, coloured images, cartoonsetc and in '*Rongmon*' comics also, various interesting stories of humans and animals

were depicted through coloured sketches and cartoons. In the current period, the rich legacy of Assamese child magazine is being carried by magazines like 'Rongmela', 'Xopun' etc.

3.0 Conclusion:

As per a recent survey, circulation of child magazines has seen a significant reduction in the last few years, compared to earlier times. The challenges offered by rapid advancement of technology before the world of magazines and literature can be cited as one of the major reasons. In this context, one can partially blame the guardians of the children as well, because lack of awareness in guardians' mind about the positive aspects of literature and magazines has resulted in decreased interest amongst children towards those literary contents. One has to walk side by side with all the contemporary changes that passing time has in offer, but things which should be preferred for overall physical and mental development should always be prioritised and a habit of reading literary creations is one such thing. But there exists exceptions as well, where we see children developing a simultaneous habit of reading and writing literary contents in parallel to spending time before laptop or smart phone screens, and this truly is a sign of healthy academic and educational environment. As a guiding lamp for children, literature has always been universally recognised and acclaimed, and one can't deny the importance and urgency of its continuance in the current scenario as well.

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