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Effect of Assessment (Validity and Reliability) of English Language Testing on (EFL) Students' Terminal Exam

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Abstract

Background: Assessment is the systematic process of documenting and using empirical data to measure knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs. In assessment the terms validity and reliability are the two most important elements in test designing and the process of scoring and administering of the test that directly influence learning outcomes. It is a very important issue for every instructor to be involved in test designing in order to measure what is intended to be measured, especially in EFL contexts.

Objectives: To find out the effect of validity and reliability of assessment in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) testing on students' final outcome's performance, and to explore the factors which directly influence the final testing results.

Method and Material: This is qualitative research; the research design is descriptive, and the data was analyzed descriptively. In this research, first we searched for the keywords which related to the research topic through the online academic journals and up to date sources such as (ERIC, ADRI). Out of 51 articles, we reviewed twenty-six of them which mostly explained the effects of validity and reliability of the test on students' performance. The articles were published between (1989-2022) years.

Results: The findings indicated that there is a significant link between the final testing result of students, and the English test we designed for English courses. The factors which influence the

process of validity and reliability are shortage of congruence between the objectives of the curriculum, the format of the test, and teachers' inadequate understanding about the assessment.

Conclusion: In assessment the term validity and reliability are meaningful measurements that should be considered when attempting to evaluate the progress of students in any educational setting. It is pivotal issue for every instructor to be considered in test designing to assess what is intended to be measured especially for EFL instructors.

Keywords: Effect of Assessment, Test Designing, Validity and Reliability, Language Testing, fairness

Introduction

Assessment is the systematic process of documentation by using realistic data to measure performance knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs. Assessment designers strive to create assessments that show a high degree of fidelity to the following traits (Content Validity, Reliability and Fairness).

Assessing students' knowledge and skills in the learning process requires valid and reliable assessment tools so that we can achieve the goal we set for specific courses. The assessment tools consist of the written test, oral test, field work, practical work, portfolio, conference, and the presentation. If we want to achieve the goal we set for specific educational field, we must develop a standardized test that assesses somehow the knowledge and skill of students through the whole course. Meanwhile, most of the students fail or get lower passing score in the final exam of English language which is a big problem in EFL context of language testing. Validity and reliability are essential topics in designing and administering and scoring a test.

Even exam atmosphere affects final result of any kind of testing to measure examinees' improvement. Reliability means if the test consistently measures what is supposed to be measured. Reliability is the degree to which an assessment tool produces stable and consistent results. The term *validity* means if the test measures what is supposed to be measured.

According to Hughes (1989) , validity and reliability are meaningful measurements that should be considered when attempting to evaluate the status of or progress of students in an education setting. Reliability means the test consistently measures what is supposed to be measured. Cozby, 2001 stated that “Reliability is the degree to which an assessment tool produces stable and consistent results”. Cozy (2001, p.18). He emphasized that Reliability should be considered in three various stages such as before test, during the test and after the test. The term validity means if the test measures what is intended to be measured. It is a very essential issue for every instructor, especially EFL instructors to be considered in test designing in order to measure what is supposed to be measure. The term **validity** runs side by side with standard test. We call the test valid when the three focal components (content, objective, and test) relate to each other.

Teaching is a dynamic and flexible profession that requires changes. Most professional teachers bring changes in the supplementary and teaching methods, evaluation and testing method, even class atmosphere regularly every semester. They work for more professional and satisfactory manners of learning and teaching and to fulfill their students’ needs.

Research Objectives: It is based on exploring the effect of validity and reliability of English language testing on (EFL) students’ summative assessment performance and to find out the factors that influences the final consequences.

Research Questions

1. What factors influence the EFL students’ final assessment results?
2. Can there be validity without reliability?
3. Why do most of the EFL students fail in the final exam however they enthusiastically take part in learning process?

Method and Material

This qualitative research was conducted through descriptive study design and the data was analyzed descriptively. In this research, we searched for the keywords which related to the

research topic through the online scientific and up to date journals such as (ERIC, ADRI and etc).

Exclusion and Inclusion Criteria

We included articles that related to our topic. Additionally, we tried to find articles which were published in the reputed journals. The unreliable journals' articles were not included in this study.

After reviewing abstracts of all articles, we selected the ones which related to the EFL assessment. Out of 51 articles, we reviewed twenty- six articles that mostly explained the effect of assessment elements (validity and reliability) of the test on students' performance. Then, we summarized them and used the information in this research. Finally, we selected twenty-six of them which mostly focused on assessing students' performance in EFL context. The articles were published between (1989-2022).

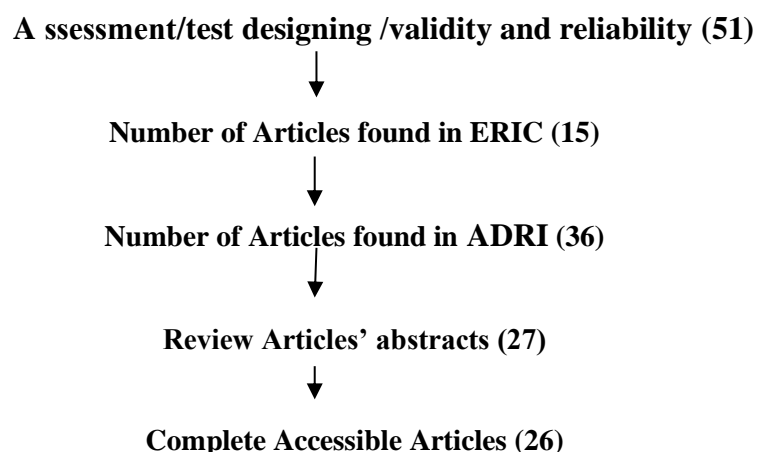


Figure (1): Shows the way of searching and selecting articles for the study.

Results

The findings revealed answers to the three research questions. One of the most significant discussions in language testing, which is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore has been the question of validity. In the past few decades, the conceptualization of validity has influenced extreme changes and has left its initial direction behind by focusing mainly on the question of whether the interpretations and actions based on the test scores are justified in the terms of evidential or consequential bases underlying test use (Messick, 2011).

The first section of the results explored the factors that influence the results of students' performance in terminal exam. The researchers stated their viewpoints on the impact of validity and reliability of the test and its role in assessment of English language testing on students' final result performance and the factors which directly influence the assessment process. The authors stated that validity should be considered 'the core of any form of assessment that is trustworthy and accurate.' Therefore, it has been borne in mind that validity, as an evolving complex concept, is closely related to the inferences made from assessment results.

The assessment element that helps this process of evaluation to be more valid is DIF (Differential Item Functioning). According to McNamara and Roever (2006), DIF originated in the early twentieth century and was used for the role of fairness in different tests to measure DIF. It was mainly prompted by researchers' interest in tapping social equity. The main purpose of DIF was to specify the confounding variables through purging items that highlighted the examinees' performance on tests. Mellenbergh (1989) defining item bias as conditional dependence, suggests that statistical tests and keys based on item response theory may be used for detecting biased items when items characteristic curves of the two groups being tested do not match. By relying on empirical or simulated data and combining information on the regression of item responses on hidden trait or observed test score and information on the hidden trait or observed test score distribution, it is possible to identify the biased items. Messick (1989) debated on the significant aspects of the tests in his validation framework-oriented testing research toward such conceptual variables as DIF, validity, and fairness causing a number of techniques for identifying biased items in different tests. As such, detecting differential functioning techniques turned into a primary concern in test development and test use whose main objective is to demonstrate that the interpretations and uses made of test scores are credible and trustworthy.

In the past few decades, Differential Item Functioning (DIF) has become increasingly an important area in language testing research. DIF is evidence of bias if the factor creating is not relevant to the construct characterizing the test. In short, if the factor is part of the construct, it is preferably called item impact instead of bias. In viewpoint of above remarks, most researchers have focused on

DIF and Differential Distractor Functioning (DDF) separately. However, the present study aims to critically examine the effect of hybridizing DIF and DDF to improve the validity and reliability of the language achievement tests. Moreover, the findings of this study will help test developers not only to become aware of some apparently invisible biases but to avoid them and subsequently to develop tests with much higher validity and great potential for fairly testing language skills of the examinees. Most researchers' articles address the integration of DIF and its possible effect on improving test validity and enhancing test fairness.

Therefore, this requires inference- based evaluative judgments that are reflective of truth and lead to specific interpretations and actions. According to Messick (2011, p. 5), "what is to be validated is not the test or observation device, but the inference derived from the test scores or other indicators". He also mentioned that basically because of the importance of precise and accurate inferences, test developers' accuracy in constructing tests has a great influence on the validity of assessment so that the suitability of the inferences made about the results of a test reflects the appropriateness of the conclusions derived from the testees' performance on the items including a specific test.

Consequently, test items are written to measure psychological attributes which are often not directly possible. In fact, they serve as representative measures of an unobservable psychological trait, a specific kind of knowledge, or psychomotor skill. Particularly, test items require examinees to employ their intellectual and thinking skills in order to answer the test items. This provides test developers with a physical measurement by which they can improve the validity of the test and the quality of the inference they make in order to judge the examinees' behaviors in terms of answering the test items or performing the required skills. (McNamara & Roever, 2006)

McNamara and Roever (2006) stated that test items act as stimuli whose main purpose is to prompt a prescribed or expected answer. The confirmation to a particular test item can be presentative of the fact that the examinee has acquired the intended characteristic or the attribute or has the ability to perform the skill taught. Since test are mainly applied for making high- stake decisions about the examinee, the assessment of the test result must be under careful examination and must be as fair as possible (Fulcher & Davidson, 2005; Shohamy, 2001; Stobart, 2005; Weir, 2005, as cited in

McNamara & Roever, 2006). Theoretically, biased test items may adversely affect test fairness and might have significant implication for policymakers, test developers, and test takers. Therefore, in developing a high-stake test, test developers should determine the extent to which a test item is affected by bias or impact.

The second section of results explored integration of validity and reliability in assessment. The item bias and item impact are closely tied to item validity and reliability that play a crucial role in language testing. As the most articles stated, item bias refers to the misspecification of the hidden ability space, where items measuring multiple abilities are scored as though they are measuring single ability. Moreover, according to Ackerman (2006), when two groups taking an identical or the same test possess different multidimensional ability distributions and the test items can possibly differentiate these levels of abilities on such multiple dimensions, then any unidimensional scoring method would unintentionally result in item bias. Therefore, item bias is an artifact of the testing procedure and is created when the source of the differential functioning of the item is irrelevant to the purpose of the test and the interpretation of the measures just because the item is tapping a factor which is over and beyond the targeted factor.

We agreed with the idea of the authors stated above. In any learning process there are many factors that directly influence the outcome. As we have different learning styles and strategy, the same as we have diverse socioeconomic, cultural, and educational backgrounds. A smaller number of EFL students have the chance of admission to a reliable and standard private language institutions/ course with well-educated instructors due to poor economic condition. Beside cultural issues are another factor, especially for Islamic countries (mixed classes of boys and girls) that limits the learning process and affects outcome.

In other studies which implemented in 2020 by Walker and Gocer Şahin, using differential item functioning, tried to evaluate interrater reliability as a guide to determine if two raters differ with respect to their rating on a polychromatic rating scale or constructed response item. More specifically, they used differential item functioning (DIF) analyses to assess inter-rater reliability and compared it with traditional interrater reliability measures. The results showed that DIF procedures appear to be a promising alternative to assess the interrater reliability of constructed response items, or other polychromatic types of items, such as rating scales.

On the other hand, item impact exists when one group of examinees tend to answer a particular test item more correctly than the other group of examinee because the two groups truly differ on the underlying ability (age, gender, intellectuality, skills, knowledge, learning style and learning strategy, environment, economy and etc.) In other words, item impact occurs when the item measures a relevant characteristic of the test without considering the actual differences existing between the two groups under assessment (Gelin, Carleton, Smith, & Zumbo, 2005). Clearly, the significant matters of test fairness and equity are essentially important because all examinees should enjoy equal opportunity to perform satisfactorily on a large –scale assessment and later being treated impartially in terms of their test scores (Moghadam & Nasirzadeh, 2020).

This portion of results investigated reasons of EFL students' failure in terminal exam. The distinction between item bias and item impact is defined and clarified by the purpose of the measure. Therefore, test developers should carefully analyze the test items to see that they are identified as presenting Differential Item Functioning (DIF). It is interesting to consider that DIF is not the direct indicator of bias in a test. Rather, as Karami (2011) maintained, that DIF is evidence of bias if the factor creating is not relevant to the construct characterizing the test.

A possible explanation for DIF is that it occurs when examinees from different groups with different demographic background like gender, ethnicity but the same true ability have a different probability of answering the item correctly. In short, if the factor is part of the construct, it is called item impact instead of bias. In viewpoint of above remarks, most researchers have focused on DIF and (DDF) separately. However, the present study aims to critically examine the effect of hybridizing DIF and DDF to improve the validity and reliability of the language achievement tests.

Discussion

As a result, test developers must make sure that the information obtained from such examinations was reliable and valid. This is only achievable if the items used in the test do not function differentially among different sub-population of examinees across different disciplines because of the factors which are not particularly relevant to the construct being measured. Most researchers stated that under identical testing conditions, it is expected that the examinees from different groups with comparable ability level show similar probability of responding correctly to a given item. Under such

circumstances, DIF represents a modern psychometric method to the investigation of between group score variations. On the other hand, DDF is used to investigate the quality of a measure through understanding the biased responses across groups by shedding light on the potential sources of construct irrelevant variance by examining whether the differential selection of incorrect distractors attracts various groups differently (Penfield, 2010).

A possible explanation for DIF might be that it occurs when examinees from different groups with different demographic background like gender, ethnicity but the same true ability have a different probability of answering the item correctly. On the other hand, differential distractor functioning (DDF) is a phenomenon when different distractors, or inappropriate option choices, attract various groups with the same ability differentially. Martinkova and Drabinova (2018, p.505) suggested that when “a given item functions differently for two groups, it is potentially unfair, thus detection of DIF and DDF should be routine analysis when developing and validating educational and psychological tests”. Moreover, the findings of this study will help test developers not only to become aware of some invisible biases but to avoid them and then to develop tests with much higher validity and great possible for fairly testing language skills of the examinees. Most researchers’ articles address the integration of DIF and its possible effect on improving test validity and improving test fairness.

Conclusion

This paper has given an account of and the reasons for the importance of the test fairness by addressing the validity of designed general English language achievements test. The evidence of most research studies suggests that the social consequences of general English achievement tests and other language tests have been essentially important issue in recent decades. Instructors should bear in mind that careful design and development of any language test is a prerequisite and appropriate for any kind of assessment in EFL context. The current findings add substantially information to understanding of test validation and reliability and the crucial role it plays in the decision made about the test-takers, policymakers, and test developers’ awareness about the importance of assessment. Validity and reliability are directly interrelated to each other in testing and evaluation.

Suggestions

We ask novice researchers to conduct quantitative research on the topic because there are many points that require exploration. We would like to recommend the head of any language learning private institutions to assign their members to establish their own exam committee to at least decrease the bias and distractors in assessment process. In recent years we have witnessed many exam problems before, during and after the exams contentiously that undergo the validity and reliability of assessment in every discipline.

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Evaluation of Policy and Practices in Primary Level Schools for English Language Writing Skills in Bangladesh

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Abstract

The data collection approach for this research is a mixed method to examine the policy and practices for English writing skills in primary-level schools in Bangladesh. The survey was conducted by questionnaires for 12 teachers and 14 students. The last few questions included open-ended questions about classroom practices, teaching methods, class adaptation, and learning. The questions focused on whether students could develop independent writing skills in real-life situations. This research contains qualitative data from secondary sources such as books, journals, and articles, as well as quantitative data as this research conducts surveys of teachers and students on the challenges, providing reliability in primary school writing skills. This study is essential as it helps recognize problems that cause weak writing skills. However, this study may only generalize to some of Bangladesh's schools or educational systems due to the need for more materials and survey participants.

Keywords: writing skills, primary school level, policy and practice, Bangladesh

English language teaching policies are a systematic approach to quality learning. Policies such as teacher training or curriculum organization must be better conducted, as they may cause severe hindrances to English language learning. In Bangladesh, teaching English in primary-level schools should maintain a strategy for primary bilingual learners to adapt and develop English language skills such as listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Bengali medium schools are Bengal-instructed institutions where English needs to be better exposed. Hence, it is vital to

recognize and utilize English language principles and policies in Bengali medium primary-level schools.

As per psycholinguistics, reading and writing are two primary skills for understanding language and completing the requirements to be literate. Adult language learners face difficulty learning reading and writing in English because they acquire language to localize (in precisely two areas of the brain: Broca's area, associated with speech production and articulation, and Wernicke's area, which is associated with comprehension) in the brain. Language learning takes time because of lateralization, i.e., the delay in language learning has impaired the right side of the brain. Therefore, teaching English at the primary level in the critical period of plasticity (when children acquire language) of human development can be advantageous with the required exposure and materials for language development.

National Education Policy (2012) in Bangladesh has revised the primary curriculum to develop English skills. National Curriculum Policy helps in a systemic approach to quality learning and teaching; it is a unified method for Bengali medium and government schools. It adds an advantage to the study as the same syllabus for most schools allows generalizing.

This study aims to explore policy implementation in primary-level schools to teach and develop writing skills.

Research Questions:

- How are teachers endorsing or implementing techniques for the learners' writing skills in primary-level schools?
- Are teachers following the curriculum policies on language teaching?
- Are curriculum policies competent enough to develop students' writing skills?
- Are students getting enough exposure to develop writing skills?

Review of Literature

Challenges of Teaching the English Language at the Primary Level Schools in Bangladesh by Hossain et al. (2015) concentrated on the teaching variable, which may cause hindrance to learning for young learners, as stated in the heading. The importance of developing communicative skills is taught in primary schools in Bangladesh. These communicative skills are comprehended by speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

In the interview results, the paper pointed out that the issues with English language practices could have been better. In students' interviews, skills such as listening were not practiced for their language enhancement, and other skills acquired for developing communication were under 60%. Teachers' interviews also showed that teaching training, aids, guides, and knowledge were below 60%. The classroom observation also noted that teachers' techniques, management, and knowledge were unsatisfactory.

Similarly, in Rahman & Sarker's (2019) Teachers' Classroom Practice to Develop Students' English Writing Analysis, the English language is the lingua franca of communication globally, where writing skill is the most communicative method used—this writing skill compromised over organizing, revising, and editing to enable the language barrier. Weak writing skills can hinder employment; students should be taught how to communicate or write at an early age. Inadequate writing skills can hinder employment and writing processes, such as translating thoughts from the native language to the English language. Young children's most common challenge is their low grammar, punctuation, and spelling skills. Effective writing at a young age helps to develop strong writing skills (Graham et al., 2012).

National Education Policy made the English language available from kindergarten to university level in Bangladesh, emphasizing English language learning as an international language. Teaching English at the primary level helps students develop competence in all four English language skills through meaningful and enjoyable activities (NCTB, 2012). Hence, in school writing, students are assisted by skills and examinations in Bangladesh's education system (Hasan et al., 2016). Students still need help to achieve basic competency and the fear of foreign languages. This research was conducted in a primary Government school in Dhaka City,

Bangladesh. The study collected qualitative data which looked into the classroom practices that develop English language writing skills at the primary level in Bangladesh. The sample included five teachers from the school, who were observed in their English language classes, and an in-depth interview was conducted.

The government school uses three writing skill approaches: Rule-based, genre, and creative writing. Writing task: fill in the blanks, match matching, illustration description of short, one-sentence, or one-word answers, and free writing activities. Writing activities are conducted in different ways, and these activities are conducted through free, guided, and controlled methods. The study revealed that most teachers used traditional methods by memorizing grammatical rules, commas, and paragraphs, unchecking copies, or giving proper feedback.

The results revealed that teachers concentrated on developing students' reading skills and levels and emphasized writing. As a controlled writing method was used, providing feedback was not done regularly. Guides and content books were provided to teachers. The infrastructure and the shortage of teaching aids caused a hamper on studies; the assessment provided in the classroom was mainly test-based or oral. Many variables are inadequate teachers' or students' social status, family support or attendance challenges in teaching, inappropriate English teaching, and lack of creativity, which creates barriers to language use.

Bitir & Duran's (2020) *Fourth Grade Primary School Students' Critical Writing Skill Levels* focused on five Turkish primary schools of fourth-grade students; the results of the evaluation showed that the students of class 4 had below average critical writing skills, which can be related to lack of critical writing inclusiveness in Turkish Language Curriculum and insufficient teachers' attention towards writing skills that can be related with insufficient knowledge or equipment to use the technique that develops writing skills. It was also observed that students had a low average dimension of inquiry correlated to presenting evidence and persuading and a low critical Writing. However, there was no difference between critical writing skills in female and male students. Factors like social status affect students with higher socioeconomic status as the environment affects language development.

Critical writing skills available to students, it is highly recommended that teachers have the knowledge and understanding; English Language Curriculums need to be improved, and materials and curriculum should include applications and instructions of critical writing to develop the full capability of all the language skills.

English Language Assessment in Bangladesh Today: Principles, practices, and Problems by Islam et al. (2021) examined the difference between the reality of principles in English language teaching and the practical application. English Language learning could have been more effective due to assessment methods and issues between curriculum goals and effectiveness. Bangladesh's education model is British-based and has three stages: primary, secondary, and tertiary. The education policy in Bangladesh follows goals, objectives, and access to the fundamental rights of all children. The policy also focused on overall education levels, updating the curriculum to achieve quality enhancement in teaching and learning.

The primary curriculum based on national education policy aims to acquire competence at a global level. This curriculum is essential for language skills such as speaking, listening, reading, and writing, but this policy does not contain any assessment guidelines for instructors. The traditional approach focusing on tests does not include communicative tasks that assess students' English abilities.

The assessment practiced by young learners could be more functional in a real-life context. The practice of large-scale tests hampers learning and promotes memorization of language structures and pieces to pass tests. This method also psychologically affected the student, causing low self-esteem towards using the language confidently. There are differences between curriculum, principles of assessment, and actual practices; alternative assessment methods and feedback are necessary. Teachers' expertise is crucial for learners as it focuses on transmitting knowledge and information.

In Policies and Strategies to Improve Education in Bangladesh, Mustary (2021) stated that policy can improve the performance of education in Bangladesh. The government plays a vital role

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in formulating strategies that bring improvement. These policies should be implemented in schools. This study used mixed methods and accountability theory as these educational policies made by the government are accountable for the improvement of education today. According to reports from the World Bank, Bangladesh has collaborated with the World Bank in the educational sector, increased tutoring to reduce students' weaknesses, offered grants to students, and improved infrastructures. Programs such as Teaching Quality Improvement in Secondary Educational Programs have ensured that education levels are enhanced in schools. These programs are for the teachers to improve their activities and knowledge and provide quality teaching. Programs like PEDP and TQI-SEP are policies that play a significant role. They have been modernized and improvised. Nevertheless, many schools use outdated curriculum that causes the students not to get the modern education to adapt their knowledge to the changes occurring around the world. Employing policies can increase literacy levels, making children attend a school that impacts national education.

English, Education, and Globalization: A Bangladesh Perspective by Akteruzzaman & Islam (2017) presented the English language as an international element that is important and useful for the Bangladesh population. It also estimates the economic and cultural characteristics of the English language in Bangladesh. The statistics illustrated the incompetence of English in Bangladesh that requires improvement.

The outcome exhibited that current English language teaching practices need more quality and international standards. The learner focuses on the English language as a mandatory part of career development, but due to the incompetence in the development process due to inconsistency and faulty teaching system. Even university students need to take satisfactory or effective English language courses. As per the National Textbook of English (Higher Secondary Level) in Bangladesh, students must be able to learn six thousand new words before entering the university premises. The students do not use real-life communication and are frightened while using English. Hence, their reluctance in all English skills, especially speaking, is noticeable. Teachers largely follow methods heavily focused on grammar skills and reading skills. Students must be motivated to study independently.

The results showed that 53% of respondents believe they can only improve their lives by understanding English. The English language is the false sense of "knowledge" that arises from "coercion" and conformity to the state without feeling any animosity (Gramsci, 1980). Present Bangladesh uses a new dialect called “Banglish” that combines English and Bangla (Manzoor, 2006; Nordquist, 2016). Bangladesh uses English on a limited scale, such as in the government or official documents, where English is rarely used; as per the author, this creates a mindset for students to only study and enhance English for better grades. Regardless, there is no evidence for this type of mindset. Hence, they do not focus on bringing immediate changes in education policy. The author suggests that a more real-life-based and modern approach to the English language should be provided in classes as the English language opens a doorway to globalization for students.

Government Primary School Teacher Training Needs for Inclusive Education in Bangladesh by Siddik & Kawai (2020) scrutinized teachers’ training and practices in the classroom as it affects students’ education; it also suggested that training of Government Primary Schools (GPS) should provide in-service as it improvised with curriculum, techniques and quality teaching. The future of Bangladesh must have a fair education system for which improvement is essential.

This study found that teachers had no formal school background even if they completed one year of training to get a certificate with insufficient time. Teachers had limited knowledge, lacked awareness about inclusive education, and needed to understand the education system and curriculum. Students with particular needs should get inclusive education as few teachers are pessimistic that these disabilities are caused by bad conduct. GPS prepares teachers with alternative communication techniques.

Bangladesh's primary schools adhere to the national curriculum. The same textbooks are used in all government schools for special needs children because each student has individual talents and needs. Therefore, it is difficult for their teachers to use the same book. Local schools without qualified instructors require assistance from GPSs with teachers trained in inclusive education; the National Education Policy 2010, GPS instructors are necessary to integrate students

with special needs in their educational practices. As a result, GPS teachers must work together to educate all students. Classrooms. GPS instructors must be able to adapt the parents' perspective of typically developing children with all sorts of requirements.

Similarly, *The Write Aid for ELLs: The Strategies Bilingual Student Teachers Use to Help Their ELL Students Write Effectively* by Sunseri & Sunseri (2019) focused on the writing approaches teachers use for bilingual students. Teachers use students' native language to improve their English and promote the vocabulary they acquire while writing. Teachers' active participation helps to overcome students with learning difficulties, like displaying their ability and weakness in their work, which are possible by using their own "funds of knowledge" to support their students' writing achievement. The authors suggested including bilingual teachers to share their skills, tactics, and lived experiences to engage and support their students.

Furthermore, *Experiences of Primary School with Students with Reading and Writing Difficulties* by Akyoli et al. (2021) explored the issues of primary school teachers in recognizing and limiting reading and writing skills. This article also stated that teachers must know more about identifying students with reading or writing difficulties. Students are usually hesitant to put their ideas forward due to different situations, such as needing more confidence, and may consider a sense of failure. Teachers play a significant role of responsibility; hence, they must be adequately trained. Due to in-service training, academically successful teachers may feel competent in their professional roles. According to a study by Çoğaltay and Çetin (2020), classroom teachers' opinions have indicated that students with particular learning difficulties have low academic achievement and are backward in the educational field. Teachers face classroom time limitations and cannot focus on students with particular learning issues. Lack of training caused inadequate class control. A positive classroom is helpful where students can reassure themselves and talk about their problems. Students' mindset of competing with other students and class time expanding can help students.

Likewise, Gupta's (2019) *Principles and Practices of Teaching English Language Learners* portrayed various approaches and methods for educators to help English language learners

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effectively acquire. This paper recapitulated the principles and practices for teachers of all levels and students with different learning difficulties. Hence, teachers can modify their method according to the learners' needs. The central concept of this article presented pedagogical techniques derived from a theoretical framework that has emerged from second language acquisition research. The author explained these seven concepts for ESL instructors: 1) Understand the student's goals for learning a second language. 2) Establish a pleasant atmosphere in the classroom 3) Develop Background Information 4) Supply Comprehensible Input via Vocabulary Development 5) Provide lots of chances for conversation and interaction 6) Employ various teaching modalities 7) Continued review and evaluation.

One must give ESL students their pace to adapt to learning after reading or introducing a specific text in the curriculum areas. ESL students require personalized goals for them and that they can comprehend. Students need to feel confident and safe to make mistakes in their classroom. Flashcards, virtual boards, jigsaw puzzles, and book circles of English vocabulary help students' practice. Teachers must evaluate students' abilities, including reading, writing, doing, talking, seeing, hearing, and interacting with their parents about their progress. The author suggested digital platforms to enable students to hinder English language learning. Teachers should have interaction abilities such as a better understanding of the instructions and the information by using "images, gestures, PowerPoint slides, podcasts, voice inflexion, intonation, and body language as non-verbal clues" (Gupta, 2019). Another tactic is reinforcing student understanding by giving written instructions after vocal instructions, with students to communicate their ideas. Teachers must offer different activities to make classes exciting or feel engaged; providing a low-stress learning environment and establishing a collaborative learning environment to consider ESL students' demands is vital.

English-in-education policy and planning in Bangladesh: A critical examination by Hamid & Erling (2016) described how Bangladesh has yet to concentrate on language-in-education policy research, considerably due to the scarcity of local expertise and a shortage of research allowance. This chapter analyzed English language policy and planning in Bangladesh to deliver a performance of the factors that have impacted policies, their enactment, and outcomes. Bangladesh

is a country where millions of people live in a less prominent land area than New York State. Hence, poverty is inevitable, yet progress has been displayed in recent years in having the highest literacy in the world. Moreover, Bangla is the national language. Bangladesh's education system can be divided into the stream cater, madrasa, Bengali medium, and English medium. Policymakers still need to incorporate the resource and personnel policies that affect the success of learning or teaching. Private tuition is also a part of degrading the educational system, students' self-motivation, and creating negligence towards educational institutions. There are significant issues that cause problems in English learning.

Comparably, Does Teacher's Educational Qualification Matter in Primary Classroom? Fawzia and Ahmed's (2016) paper illustrated that teachers with high qualifications and equally high salaries have many prospects of securing high achievement in their classrooms. The semi-structured interview showed that teachers with higher education used more enhancing techniques for classroom learning, and students were more engaged and responsive in their classes. Hence, primary school teachers should have a suitable education qualification as it helps recognize students' difficulties, and the ability to use different techniques helps the students understand and engage fully.

Moreover, *Language Wars: English Education Policy and Practice in Bangladesh* by Chowdhury et al. (2014) described education in Bangladesh as 'still sunk in theoretical or textbook education' as there is a gap in English education. The National Education Policy recognized English literacy as an instrument to construct a knowledge-based society. However, the English language in Bangladesh is still an issue as people face challenges communicating in that language, which can be improved by improving the educational system; as the author described, 'universal literacy' is needed for both Bengali and English. This will also help economically.

An Analysis and Evaluation of English Writing Skills of Class Five Students at Government Primary Schools in Dhaka City by Hasan et al. (2016) study examined Class Five students' English language writing skills at Government primary schools in Dhaka City. Their study revealed that about 35% of students got 0% in writing independently, which is the worst

situation as their communication skills were not developed within their primary years, which might cause career problems.

Besides, Teachers' Quality and Teachers' Education at Primary Education Sub-Sector in Bangladesh by Mullick & Sheesh's (2008) article suggested that schooling is partially a craft and partly a science, which signified sound teaching is a blend of artistic and scientific elements. Almost 74,000 teachers of Registered Non-Government Primary Schools (RNGPS) have received training from the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE, 2006); two examinations indicated that a considerable percentage (26-27%) still need to be trained. As Ehsan et al. (2004) suggested, the Certificate in Education (C-in-Ed) curriculum has many areas for improvement, notably its through-theoretical nature and symmetry with the primary school curriculum. Brief training might be helpful in the teachers' profession. Teachers' performance needed a transparent assessment for better recognition, status, and rewards.

Method

This study evaluated practices and policies for English language writing skills in primary-level Bengali medium or government schools in Bangladesh, the educational gap between guidelines established for language teaching and the practical (real-life) language teaching scenario.

Procedure

The primary and secondary data collection methods contained qualitative and quantitative data used in standard research methods under the literature. Both have equal advantages that helped the study by lessening the limitations and making the study more reliable. Hence, this study used a mixed data collection method.

The primary data is collected through a survey method via two online survey questionnaires; the first questionnaire has 12 questions based on how much teachers perceived the importance of writing skills development if they know the writing skill policy in English language teaching and practices in the classroom. The second questionnaire had ten survey questions for students based on their classroom experience and writing skills. The questionnaires were given based on the teachers' and students' understanding of the writing skills.

This survey contained open-ended and closed-ended questions that can be answered within the questionnaire, allowing quantitative data collection. The research tool for this survey is conducted online through Google questionnaire forms. It helped to extend or support the generalizability of the study. This survey contained close-ended questions that could be answered within the few options and some open-ended questions that could be answered by free writing provided in the questionnaire; this allowed the collection of quantitative and qualitative data.

The research tool for this survey is conducted online through Google questionnaire forms; the samples for this study were 12 Bangladeshi English teachers and 14 primary school students. This quantitative approach helps to extend or support the generalizability of the study. Quantitative data is also an advantage as it provides statistics and numbers that are easy to analyze. It is a

scientific method that gives less biased or uninfluenced data that is more reliable and generalizable. This survey contained open-ended questions, which added an advantage as the respondents expressed their thoughts.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Data

As aforementioned, the survey contained 12 questions that were responded to by 12 teachers. Fourteen students responded to secondary survey questions. The last two questions in the teacher's survey and the last in the students' survey contained open-ended questions. The questions were intended to be directed toward classroom practices, teachings, class adaptation, and learning. This question was intended to see if the students are capable of learning independent writing skills adequate for real-life situations.

The first two questions looked into the name of the sample teaching school and their training for teaching; it is essential for any research as these factors are variables of different types of the education system. The data of the teachers' responses show that 83.3% of the teachers were provided with training before or after joining school, while 16% of respondents were not. The following two questions were about whether teachers were provided with sufficient teaching aids and their understanding of the subject, so their answers on questionnaires are reliable. 75% of the Teachers were provided with materials, guides, and teaching aids for developing language, and 25% of the respondents were not provided with any materials, guides, or teaching aids for developing language.

The subsequent five questions were crucial as they focused on curriculum policies of English and strategies for improving students' writing process. Teachers' classroom practices are up to the mark as 91.7% of the teachers consider writing skills essential to teach at the primary level, 100% of the teachers gave regular feedback based on their students' work, 100% of the teachers gave students' writing tasks that they can write based on their thoughts. 58.3% of the teachers did not think their students got enough exposure to writing skills through the national curriculum policy.

The first two questions in the students' survey looked into the name of the school and which class or standard are the samples. It is vital for any research as these factors are variables of different types of education systems. It also categorized which educational systems can be generalized in this research. Approximately 50% of the students are in the fourth standard, approximately 28.5% are in the fifth standard, approximately 14.3% are in the ninth standard, and approximately 7.1% are in the third. The following five questions were about their focus on English practices in classes and their willingness or interest in the subject. Most students have good marks, 85.7% of the students responded that they receive good grades (A+ to B), and 14.3% of the students responded that they receive regular fair grades (B to C-), they are not confident enough about their writing skills as about 42.9% of the students responded Reading as a best skill they have in English language, 35.7% of the students responded Writing as a best skill they have in English language, 14.3% of the students responded Listening as the best skill they have in English language, and 7.1% of the students responded Speaking as a best skill they have in English language in the online survey.

Qualitative Data

The last two questions in the teachers' survey and the last question in the students' survey collected qualitative data that helped identify the issues of classroom practices, problems, and opinions of the teachers and students. The responses not only help in identification but also help rectify and bring new suggestions into the policy and practices in the classroom.

The last two open-ended questions targeted the teachers to identify if they have noticed the challenges and techniques of English language writing skills. The open-ended answers from teachers are identified by dividing them into two. Firstly, teachers are held responsible for students' lack of attention as a challenge in the classroom: "Students are not attentive, unserious and uncooperative" and lack of exposure due to inadequate materials and underdeveloped curriculum policies, as one said, "Not enough materials for teaching English."

In the questionnaire for students, the last question is an open-ended question that targets the students to identify the challenges hampering English language writing skills. Students' open-

ended (qualitative) answers could be divided into three. Approximately 58.3% of the students responded that they face challenges with spelling and vocabulary, a few (approximately 33.3%) responded that they face challenges with grammar, and 8.3% of students stated that they have few problems while writing. About 64.3% of the students responded that they receive regular feedback, 21.4% of students responded that they do not receive regular feedback, and 14.3% of the students responded that they are unsure if they received regular feedback or not, which can also add to their issue of being unable to wholesome learning.

Discussion

It is safe to conclude that students cannot learn what was necessary within the primary level years or get satisfactory skills or knowledge that are sufficient and age-appropriate. As analyzed by teachers' responses, the educational system needs a proper curriculum policy. The lack of teaching aids, materials, and teachers' training causes a hamper in the education system. The teachers need to provide more exposure to the usage or experience with the language so that the student can use it in real-life settings; the lack of exposure causes a gap between the understanding and use of the language in real life. Instead, the students have a controlled environment to exercise their skills. This results in the inability to employ the language in real life or outside the classroom.

Identifying the problems in the National Curriculum Policy and changing them for a student's future is essential. The National Curriculum Policy does not focus on real-life communication skills and is not challenging or exciting enough to get students' attention. Teachers should be highly knowledgeable about handling the classroom or teaching by providing different techniques, as mentioned in Does Teacher's Educational Qualification Matter in Primary Classroom? (Fawzia & Ahmed, 2016). The incompetence later results in developing a sense of fear and failure, as aforementioned in Experiences of Primary School with Students with Reading and Writing Difficulties (Akyol et al., 2021).

The students lack independent writing skills. They faced difficulty expressing their ideas; this was also a result of an exclusively controlled environment. As per the qualitative analysis, students lacked practice using synonyms and vocabulary. They have difficulty with spelling and

grammar; the reason might be improper feedback and underdeveloped adoption due to lack of exposure.

Recommendations

Firstly, classrooms with more writing classes are needed for a developing brain. The more students practice, the more issues with writing will be resolved, and confidence will be boosted. Hence, increasing the number of writing classes will be helpful. Secondly, as per the survey, many said students needed more interest; this may be because of less exposure to the language textbook with less or no appeal. Therefore, adding more materials that provide exposure to the language may help in interest. Thirdly, teachers give feedback to students for improvement; subsequently, collecting feedback based on their understanding and problem may improve teaching. Fourthly, improvising English National Curriculum Policy Bangladesh may help improve the educational system, providing a more foolproof education system. Finally, more research should be conducted as it is still in an error procedure. Research will help identify weaknesses and strengthen the educational system.

Conclusion

As aforementioned, in writing and verbal form, critical writing involves cognition skills that help cognitive development; it is also vital for effective communication or self-expression and provides good opportunities. Writing skills should be an activity that students should learn with adaptive methods and techniques. The National Education Policy for teaching practical writing skills has created a curriculum to endorse training in a planned and programmed approach, essential to achieving writing skills. However, the results showed that teachers and students of primary school face a presence of challenges. As per the survey results, it can be concluded that even the respondents could identify policy and practice problems. Suggestions for further studies are to use diverse materials and samples for the respondents to make the study more generalizable and vital.

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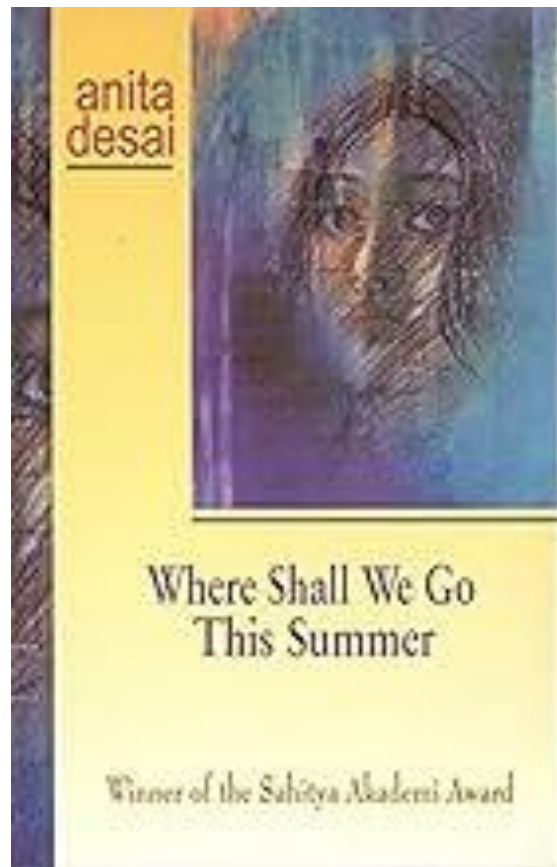
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Examining the Interplay of Reality and Illusion in Anita Desi's *Where Shall We Go This Summer?*

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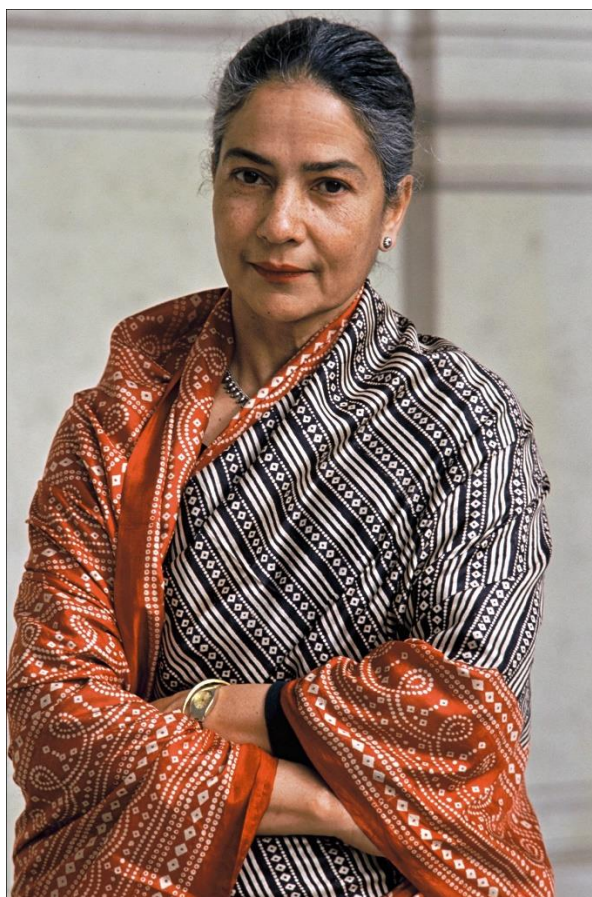


Courtesy: www.amazon.com

Abstract

Where Shall We Go This Summer? is Anita Desai's fourth novel. This novel was published in 1988. Anita Desai is an Indian expatriate writer. Her writings have been nominated for the Booker Prize three times. Anita Desai introduced psychology to Hindi and English literature. She stated that she has always been interested in expressing women's emotions in her stories. *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* is a woman-themed novel. Here, the novelist describes the bad mood of the heroine, Sita. Sita is tired of all the tricks of city life. She is depressed and lives alone due to marital conflict. Sita swings like a pendulum between reality and illusion. This article tries to find Sita's psychological problems by examining the novel. The main theme is to show Sita's conflict between reality and imagination.

Keywords: Anita Desai, *Where Shall We Go This Summer?*, Reality, Illusion, Psychological, Artificialities, Disharmonious



Anita Desai

Courtesy: <https://orlando.cambridge.org/people/6a63527e-61b0-47f9-8b51-e51e9ae3605f>

Introduction

Anita Desai is a prolific writer from India. She is one of the best female novelists of English literature in post-colonial India. She was rewarded with a world record. Anita Muzumdar was born on June 24, 1937, in Mussoorie, India. Her father is Dina Nath Mazumdar, a Bangali, and her mother is Antoinette Nime Mazumdar, a housewife of German origin. Anita Desai grew up in a home where he learned Bengali, Hindi, and German. She published her first

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story at the age of nine. Desai herself said, “I first learned English when I was at school; it was the first language I learned to read and write, so it became my language.” Anita Desai studied in India and started working at Max Muller Bhawan in Calcutta. She later worked at other institutions and eventually attended MIT as the John E. Emerita. Burchard Professor of Humanities. Desai is married to Ashvin Desai, a well-known businessman in Kolkata.

Anita Desai boldly entered the world of fiction with her novel *Cry the Peacock* in 1963, and all readers were amazed by her talent. She has written more than a dozen books since then. Desai competed for the Booker Prize three times, in 1980, 1984, and 1999, with her works *Bright Daylight on Watch*, *Fasting Feasting*, and *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* In 1980, Desai received the Sahitya Academy Award for her work, *In Custody*. Desai is a member of the Royal Society of Literature. Desai has received many awards for her work: *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* (1975), *Bye-Bye Blackbird* (1971), *Fire on the Mountain* (1977), *Clear Light of Day* (1980), *In* (1984), *Voices in the City* (1965), *Fasting Feasting* (1999), etc.

Anita Desai focuses on exploring the female soul in all her novels. It goes without saying that all her novels are women centred. All her heroines are in stressful situations, sometimes from her own creation, sometimes from relatives, and sometimes from the stories Desai told while growing up.

Where Shall We Go This Summer? Is the heart-touching story of middle-aged pregnant Sita, who does not want to give birth to her fifth child in today’s judgmental and confused world. Instead, Sita wishes to leave her womb and travel to the island of her inheritance, hoping

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for a miracle. *The Times of India* commented on this novel as “skillfully dramatised. The story lies perilously between myth and reality.” Sita, a wife and mother, is torn between harsh reality and fantasy when she decides to give birth to her unborn child. This article examines the novel and focuses on Sita’s problems and consequences.

Objectives

1. To explain the elements of both reality and illusion in the novel.
2. To reveal the conflict between reality and illusion.
3. To evaluate how the author deals with the stressful environment of the novel.

Research Methodology

The selected problems are related to the literature, so both primary and secondary data are collected from literary sources. The methodology used is primarily analytical and descriptive.

Desai’s novel, *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* presents the female protagonist, Sita, as a very sensitive and neurotic woman. Sita loses her identity as Raman’s wife and mother of four children. She is tired of giving birth and raising children. She is pregnant again with her fifth child, and the whole story is due to that fifth child that is yet to be born. Sita does not want to give birth to her fifth child. Instead, she wants to keep it carefully in her stomach. Sita announces her pregnancy to her husband with “highly paranoid rage, fear, and rebellion.” Sita’s

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husband assures her that everything will be fine. Raman hopes that Sita will soon get rid of her illness and enjoy her pregnancy period like in her previous issues. But she is shocked to see him frowning, twisting his fingers, and smoking bitterly at night, showing pain. When Raman asks her if she wants an abortion, Sita says that she wants to keep it. Raman tries to comfort her, and Sita decides to go to Manori Island in hope of some miracle that will help her keep her baby unborn but safe inside her womb. Sita says, she will go to the island, and it will be different. Raman asks her if expecting some miracles on the island is possible. Sita replied that she was sure of that on the island of her childhood. Sita believes that Manori Island has black magic. According to Sita, Manori is an enchanting island of wonders.

In fact, as a child, Sita experienced a miracle that happened on the island. Sita's father is the one who holds her magical powers. Sita lives in a fantasy world even now. Sita recalls memories of her childhood and how her father treated these people from the continent. People called his treatments "wonder drugs." Sita remembers how a fisherwoman ran and fell at her feet, saying that her dam was healed. Sita remembers how another fisherman got Phoolmaya pregnant and brought so many gifts to her father. Once he cured a child bitten by scorpions, and the child's mother told the villagers that he had performed magic. The villager believed that he knew the magic that would remove death from all creatures. All the strange experiences and feelings on the island made Sita think that there was a miracle on the island.

Sita's mind is haunted by illusions from her childhood. She now desires to go back to Missouri and await miracles. Sita is sure of some miracle that will help her keep the baby in

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her womb. She does not want to give birth to her child in a corrupt and artificial world. Sita's husband, a very practical person, does not support her and asks her to give up such a foolish idea. Despite her husband's displeasure, Sita goes to Manori Island with one daughter and her youngest son.

The author has beautifully revealed Sita's psyche. She saw safety and protection in the illusion of the island. It would magically keep her baby safe from birth. Sita is sure that Manori will surely bless her with some miracles. Her childhood was no longer a part of her life on the Manori, which is completely surprising. It does not appeal to her as before. She did not give up hope, though. Sita tries to adapt to the limited resources and opportunities found on the island. But her children find it impossible and show their displeasure.

The monsoon made their lives on the island much more miserable. Children blame her for all their misfortunes. They are waiting for their mother to realise that there is life in their house in Bombay City and her so-called "escape" to the island, which is madness. Every day, Sita waits patiently for some magic, but nothing new happens. Sita stands confused. She is searching for the magic island that she has promised herself. It was now buried behind the gentle grey-green Mildew of the monsoon, if it had ever existed at all—black, glittering, and dazzling as in her memory. Sita became used to her calm, semi-conscious, and dreamy life on the island.

She never felt alone. The island, the sea, the palms, and the house are his companions. They are so alert that sometimes they speak to her. She assures her unborn child that she will keep him safe inside. Suddenly, Sita came to know that Raman's arrival on the island made her feel a violent throbbing of grief within her. Sita initially refuses to return to Bombay. She has many reasons not to return to the mainland.

Finally, she realises that she cannot escape reality and decides to get back with her husband. While packing for the return trip, Sita's mind is full of different thoughts.

The author uses the stream of consciousness technique to reveal his psyche. He writes: "As soon as he got home, he had to pack himself, then pack a suitcase full of baby clothes... He could see the expressionless faces of the night nurses in the women's ward. Then, after a baby was born, facing the shoulders of..." The novel is a skillful dramatisation of an inner conflict where the female protagonist dares to say the great 'No'. There comes a day for certain people. When it comes time to give the big yes or no.

Conclusion

Anita Desai's *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* describes the thoughts and feelings of two lovers, Sita, and Raman. Misunderstandings and impatience frequently impede the normal flow of thinking among lovers, who typically have poor mental flows. The main theme of the novel is Sita's hatred and humiliation at the birth of her fifth child. She knows the joy of motherhood and finds satisfaction. But she has been emotionally scarred in recent years. She

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was worried that different nurses and doctors would criticise him. That's why she tried to escape from this problem.

Here, it is impossible to escape from the present to the past because the past is dead. But it exists now, and its existence is undeniable. So, where should we escape? **Where Shall We Go This Summer?** The only answer is: don't go anywhere. There's nowhere to go, but now, are you alive? Everyone must find this out for himself or herself; there is no real medicine.

The question in the title has a beautiful meaning: Live in the moment, wherever you are. From the above observations, it can be seen that the main cause of Sita's neurosis was her inability to understand and tolerate difficult situations in life. This implicit difference prepares us for Sita's rejection, because the final analysis of the novel seems to be about Sita's rejection—the rejection of her feelings. Sita's dreams of escaping the circle of knowledge are constantly shattered by the intrusion of the reality from which she is desperate to escape.

Sita has said a great no to her duties and responsibilities. She has escaped from order and routine, from life and the city to the island. Sita has refused to say when they must say the great yes or the great no. She escaped order and routine, life, and cities to an island. Sita refused to give birth to her fifth child, instead keeping him safely inside her womb. The final part of the novel explains how Sita accepts the fact that no miracle can save her child from birth. In the end, the author correctly states that reality dominates illusions, and the novel ends with Sita

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accepting reality and returning to a normal life. Thoughts, ideas, emotions, and reasons are at the centre of all of Anita Desai's stories.

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Summer?

Semantic and Syntactic Deficits in Malayalam-Speaking Children with Learning Disability

**Dr. Swapna Sebastian, Oviya M P, Ramanadham Thejesh, and
Dr. Shyamala K.C.**

The prevalence of speech–language delay among children has been reported to be about 2.3 to 19 percent (depending on the definition and the population studied) and about 2% to 8% attending paediatric outpatient department (1). Long term consequences of language impairment on school population have been studied by researchers. The language difficulties exhibited by most children with language impairment persist through out childhood and into early adolescence and these children with a history of preschool language impairments commonly have been reported to have academic difficulties (2–5).

Studies also show that children with dyslexia may present with relatively weak language skills compared with typically developing peers (6, 7).

Even though children with language-based learning disabilities compensate for their language deficits because they are very intelligent during early elementary school, as they progress into higher classes, the demand for language escalates and they suddenly seem frustrated, angry and anxious. The change in behaviour is attributed to “typical adolescent behaviour”.

The present study aimed at comparing the different aspects of language among school going learning disabled children with that of normal peers.

Methodology

The study was planned with the following objective:

To compare the language skills of children with learning disability between the age group of 5-9 years with that of normal children.

Procedure

The study was approved by the research ethics committee of the Institution and informed consent were taken from the parents of the children. In-order to achieve the above goals, study was conducted on 2 groups of subjects - experimental group (learning disabled) and control group.

The experimental group (learning disabled) consisted of 34 children between the age group of 5-9 years diagnosed as Learning disability by a multidisciplinary team consisting of a Neurologist, Speech Pathologist and Clinical Psychologist. The control group consisted of 34 normal children in the range of 5-9 years matched for sex and age.

The subjects selected were all Malayalam mother tongue speakers. (Malayalam is a Dravidian language spoken mainly in the state of Kerala in India). All the children who participated in the study were right-handed with normal hearing thresholds in both ears and were from middle and upper strata of the socio-economic ladder, from an Urban City.

Both the control and experimental groups were tested using Malayalam Language Test by Rukmini (8)

This test has two parts:

Part 1 Semantics & Part II Syntax

The semantics and syntax sections had 11 subsections each.

All the subsections of syntax checked for reception and expression whereas, for semantics, Semantic discrimination had items only for testing comprehension and lexical category had items only for testing expression. So, in effect Syntax had 11 subtests for both reception and expression and Semantics had 10 subtests for expression and reception. A description of the sub sections and the items under each are given below.

I. SEMANTICS - All the subsections checked for reception and expression except semantic discrimination and lexical category. The subtests are as follows.

1. Semantic discrimination - had items only for testing comprehension.
2. Naming
3. Lexical category - had items only for testing expression.

4. Synonymy
5. Antonymy
6. Polar questions
7. Semantic anomaly
8. Paradigmatic relations
9. Syntagmatic relations
10. Semantic contiguity
11. Semantic similarity

Description of the test

1. Semantic discrimination:

The two categories tested here were colors and body parts. For example, the child was shown a test plate with colors and was asked to point to the one named by the tester.

2. Naming

This involved identifying the lexicon. In case of testing comprehension, the child was shown a test plate with different object pictures and was asked to point to the one named by the tester. In case of expression, he was required to name the item which was shown by the tester.

3. Lexical category

A unit of vocabulary is generally referred to as a lexical item. Here the child was instructed to name as many items as possible from a given lexical category for example: animals within a specified time (one-minute)

4. Synonymy

Lexical items, which have the same meaning, are synonyms and the relationship between them is one of synonymy. Here the child was given a pair of words and was instructed to indicate if they refer to the same thing or not like Door- window. The child was expected to respond with a yes or no answer accordingly.

For testing expression, the child was given a word say glass and was required to come out with another word which means the same. An acceptable response would be tumbler.

5. Antonymy

A term used in semantics to refer to oppositeness of meaning. Here the child was provided with a pair of words and was asked to say if they are opposites or not. Example: Big-small. For expression the child was given a word and is asked to name e another one, which is an antonym.

6. Polar Questions.

A term used for the system of positive and negative contrast found in a language. For testing comprehension, the child was given a question and was asked to give a yes or no response.

Example: Is milk black in colour? When expression was being tested the child was given a pair of words and is asked to formulate a question using those. Example: Cow-milk and the response expected was does the Co w give milk?

7. Semantic Anomaly.

These are statements that contradict facts. In this case for testing comprehension, a statement was made, and the child was required to say if it is correct or wrong. Example Fire is cold.

For testing expression, a wrong statement was made and the child was asked to correct it.

Example: Apple is a vegetable. The expected response was Apple is a fruit.

8. Paradigmatic relations

It is a term in linguistics for the set of relationships a linguistic unit has with other units in specific context. Here the child was shown a test plate with pictures on it and was asked to point out 4 items that belong to the same category. Example: fruits, flowers etc. In the case of expression, the child was given two items and was asked to name another, which belongs to the same category.

9. Syntagmatic relations

The relationship between constituents (syntagms refers to the sequential characteristics of speech) in a construction are called syntagmatic relation. For testing comprehension, the child was given two pairs of words wherein one is right, and the other may be right or wrong, Example Night-Moon, Day-Sun. For expression the child was given one pair of words which is right and was given another word for which the child had to name a suitable syntagm.

Example: Rabbit- Fast, Tortoise.

10. Semantic contiguity.

These are the relationship between noun and verb. Here the testing of comprehension was done by providing the child with a pair of words and asking him if they are semantically contiguous or not, that is whether there is any sort of relationship between the two. Example: Lamp-Candle. For expression, the child was given another word and was asked to name a semantically contiguous pair for it.

11. Semantic similarity

This expresses the inherent relationship between the items mentioned. Here for testing comprehension a pair of words was given to the child, and he was asked if the relationship

was semantically acceptable or not. Example: Song-sing. For expression the child was required to come out with a semantically related pair for the stimulus provided.

II. SYNTAX- All the subsections of syntax checked for reception and expression. The subtests are as follows.

1. Morpho-phonemic-structures
2. Plurals
3. Tenses
4. Person Number and Gender (PNG) Markers
5. Case markers
6. Transitives, Intransitives, and Causatives
7. Sentence types
8. Conjunctions and Quantities
9. Comparatives
10. Conditional clauses
11. Participial constructions

Description of the Test

1. Morphophonemic structures

These are special quasi-phonological units. In this case the child is provided with a pair of morphophonemes and was asked to choose the correct one among the two. For expression the child was shown a picture and was asked a question so as to elicit a suitable response.

2. Plurals

Includes more than one. The testing was done using pictures, which had singulars and plurals of the same item.

3. Tenses:

A category used in the grammatical description of verb referring primarily to the way the grammar marks the time at which the action denoted by the verb.

took place. Here both comprehension and expression were tested for all the 3 tenses viz., present, past and future using pictured test plates.

4. Person Number and Gender (PNG)Markers:

Person: A category used in the grammatical description to indicate the nature of the participants in a situation. Usually, a three-way contrast is found. First person in which the

speaker refers to himself, or to a group usual!) including himself, (e.g. I, We). Second person, in which the speaker typically refers to the person he is addressing (e.g. you) and third person, in which other people or things are referred to (e.g., she, it, they) The other two are self-explanatory. This was tested using picture plates which convey ideas like he is sleeping; the) are sleeping etc, for both Reception and Expression.

5. Case Markers

A grammatical category used in the analysis of word classes to identify the syntactic relation between words in a sentence through such contrasts as nominative, accusative etc or a form taken by a noun, pronoun or adjective to show its relation to neighbouring words. Both reception and expression were tested using test plates. Examples are mother is taking water from the bucket, he is writing with a pen.

6. Transitive, Intransitives and Causative

A category used in the grammar analysis of clause/sentence construction with particular reference to the verb relationship to dependent elements or structure. Transitive refers to a verb, which can take a direct object. (Example: he wants a ball). Causative is a grammatical category used to refer to the causal relationship between alternative versions of a sentence. Here too the testing was done using picture cards. Some of the samples are: Mother is sleeping; Mother is making the child sleep.

7. Sentence Types.

Refer to different sentence types as simple, declarative, interrogative etc. this case comprehension was tested using sentences belonging to these different categories and the children were instructed to respond by pointing out the appropriate picture. Example: There are flowers in the pond. For expression the children were asked to come out with sentences in different forms, according to picture as requested by the tester.

8. Conjunctions and Quantities

These are terms used to connect both the meaning and the construction of sentence elements. Here picture plates were incorporated for testing both comprehension and Expression.

Example: There is a book and a pen on the table

9. Comparatives

A term used to characterize a major branch of linguistics in which the primary concern is to make statements comparing the characteristics of two different lexical items, which are semantically related. While testing comprehension the tester asked the child to show him an item in comparison to the stimulus item. Example: The tester pointed to the picture of a house

and said " Show me the house that is bigger than this." Expression was also tested in a similar manner.

10. Conditional Clauses

A term used in grammatical description to refer to clauses whose semantic role is the expression of hypothesis or conditions. (Example: if. unless) Here for testing the Receptive skills, the child was shown a picture card with several pictures (Example: animals) and was told to respond in a particular manner if the stimuli choices have a particular stimulus.

Example: Clap your hands if there is an elephant's picture. For testing expression, he was asked questions which require answers employing the conditional clauses. Example: When n do you drink water' An expected response was when I am thirsty.

11. Participial Constructions

A traditional grammatical term used to refer to a word derived from a verb and used as an adjective as in "a laughing face". Testing was done using test plates and some of the examples of stimuli used were: He is eating while reading He fell down while playing.

Scoring

The responses were recorded as correct, incorrect or No response.

Scoring was done in the following manner for all, except lexical category, paradigmatic relations, plurals, and tenses.

Correct Response-1

Partially correct response- 1/2

Incorrect response or no response 0

For lexical category the scoring was done as follows

Naming of a single item 0

Naming of 2 or 3 items 1/2

Naming of 4 or more items 1

For paradigmatic relations-comprehension the scoring was as follows:

No response or identification of 1 item -- 0

Identification of 2 or 3 items -- 1/2

Identification of 4 items -- 1

For plural and tenses each item had two sub items and each sub item was provided with a score of 1/2

Statistical Analysis

Using the SPSS software, one way ANOVA was done to analyse the significance of difference between the control and the experimental groups.

Results and Discussion

The present study examined the language skills of children with learning disability and normal controls between the age group of 5-9 years. One way ANOVA revealed that there was a significant difference between children with learning disability and the normal controls in both syntax and semantics. [semantic reception ($F=141.70; P<0.0000$), semantic expression ($F=165.2 P<0.000$), syntax reception ($F=122.432; p<0.000$) and syntax expression ($F=89.312$)]

Semantic Reception of MLT

Group	Mean	Std Deviation	N
LD	41.21	4.04	34
Normal	50.33	3.24	34

Semantic Expression of MLT

Group	Mean	Std Deviation	N
LD	24.06	3.70	34
Normal	43.15	4.65	34

Syntax Reception

Group	Mean	Std Deviation	N
LD	37.62	5.86	34
Normal	51.91	2.26	34

Syntax Expression

Group	Mean	Std Deviation	N
LD	23.74	7.06	34
Normal	44.55	7.31	34

Syntax Reception				
Sub	LD	Normal	F	Significance
SYR1	2.32	3.36	46.654	0.000
SYR2	2.79	4.82	63.816	0.000
SYR3	2.74	4.52	30.246	0.000
SYR4	2.76	4.55	38.410	0.000
SYR5	2.91	5.00	84.385	0.000
SYR6	3.53	4.73	51.238	0.000
SYR7	3.65	4.97	57.156	0.000
SYR8	4.32	4.97	97.887	0.000
SYR9	4.09	5.00	102.445	0.000
SYR10	5.00	5.00	270.077	0.000
SYR11	3.50	5.00	168.764	0.000
Total syntax reception	37.62	51.91	122.432	0.000

Syntax Expression				
Sub	LD	Normal	F	Significance
SYE1	2.82	4.79	52.296	0.000
SYE2	3.12	4.79	63.185	0.000
SYE3	1.71	4.06	62.696	0.000
SYE4	1.88	4.79	134.858	0.000
SYE5	2.5	4.79	113.71	0.000
SYE6	2.18	3.79	37.639	0.000
SYE7	2.06	2.91	29.147	0.000
SYE8	1.62	2.94	38.076	0.000
SYE9	2.32	3.27	35.121	0.000
SYE10	2.56	4.52	93.445	0.000

SYE11	0.97	3.6	3.905	0.003
Total syntax Expression	23.74	44.55	89.312	0.000

Semantic Reception				
Sub	LD	Normal	F	Significance
SMR1	912	9.85	147.81	0.000
SMR2	4.91	5.00	652.77	0.000
SMR3	3.09	3.82	46.98	0.000
SMR4	0.74	3.18	42.449	0.000
SMR5	4.38	4.91	83.433	0.000
SMR6	3.38	4.79	42.39	0.000
SMR7	3.94	4.82	55.51	0.000
SMR8	4.47	4.85	75.86	0.000
SMR9	3.47	4.21	62.98	0.000
SMR10	3.71	4.91	64.56	0.000
Total Semantic reception	41.21	50.33	141.70	0.000

Semantic Expression				
Sub	LD	Normal	F	Significance
SME1	4.85	5.00	965.08	0.000
SME2	4.71	4.94	127.52	0.000
SME3	0.94	3.48	42.46	0.000
SME4	0.47	3.36	34.92	0.000
SME5	0.00	2.58	20.77	0.000
SME6	0.85	4.82	153.79	0.000

SME7	3.76	4.85	106.96	0.000
SME8	3.88	4.91	117.623	0.000
SME9	2.29	4.30	61.327	0.000
SME10	2.29	4.91	86.821	0.000
Total Semantic Expression	24.06	43.15	165.2	0.000

Discussion

The learning-disabled children performed significantly poorer than their controls on all the language tasks measured using Malayalam Language Test.

Semantics

The children with learning disability obtained poorer scores than their normally achieving peers on the measures of semantic reception (41.21 as compared to 50.33) and semantic expression (24.06 as compared to 43.15). The subsections of semantic discrimination, naming and lexical category were relatively easier for the children and had performed better compared to the other subsections.

Syntax

The children with academic learning disability obtained poorer scores than their normally achieving peers on the measures of syntax reception (37.62 as compared to 51.91) and syntax expression (23.74 as compared to 44.55). In the syntax section, the subsections of comparatives and conditional clauses were found to be relatively easier.

The semantic and syntactic comprehension ability was found to be better than the expression ability in both the learning-disabled children and the normally achieving children.

In general, the results obtained on the Malayalam language test indicate that there is a considerable difference in the development of both semantics and syntax in the learning-disabled children compared to the normally achieving children. This finding is in agreement with studies in other languages which showed that children with dyslexia perform more poorly than the normally achieving children on the tasks of semantics and syntax. (9,10)

Analysis of the case history of these children revealed that ten children with learning disability (29.4%) had a history of delayed speech and language whereas only one child in the control group (2.9%) had a history of delayed speech and language milestones. This again showed an association between deficits in language and learning disability at school age.

Poor academic achievement in children with normal nonverbal intelligence could be pointing towards deficits in different aspects of language. Follow up studies by Rutter, Mawhood, and Howlin on children initially diagnosed as having developmental language disorder showed that language difficulties were still evident in adulthood (2). When the demands on language increases, these children fail in their academic skills.

Summary and Conclusions

The study tried to compare the different aspects of semantics and syntax in learning disabled children with their normal peers. The results revealed that even though the learning-disabled children had adequate language to manage their daily living activities, they were inferior to their normal peers in finer aspects as revealed in the testing using Malayalam Language Test. The clinical implications of the study are that Children with preschool language impairments should be followed carefully into elementary school as they are at risk for learning disability. The study also implies that there is a critical need for professional support to learning disabled children across the life span even during their adolescent ages.

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The Designing of Gender: Women and Human Evolution

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Abstract

This paper aims at tracing the way the role of women has been designed by society in societies, and how it has begun to change with human evolution. Mary Wollstonecraft has asked very significant questions about women's lack of freedom in society and has demanded that she is given a life with equal opportunities. Art has defined beauty as something that gives pleasure to the viewer, and it is the woman who possesses this symmetry and beauty till a particular age, mainstream socio-political thought believes so. Science and technology's intervention with such perceptions, market forces, capitalistic globalization are the new areas that might bring in innovative changes in contemporary thinking, and women might not only be the only one who would be pleasing the viewer, but even men might join this process of pleasing - now as women are operating in politically powerful positions men might be required to please them - perhaps an effort to sustain the human race on earth, competing with the rest of the animals.

Keywords: gender assignment, place of women, human evolution.

Women have been considered a property of man for millennia, perhaps after man began living in groups. In human evolution, all human beings came to be considered to be equal, and hence by default, man came to be recognised as an equal to woman. Therefore, the way woman's life has been designed, as a product to please and entertain man, is slowly transforming just like other such economic and political constructions like caste hierarchy and marginalisation.

Religions and their modus operandi have controlled the lives of human beings, and new styles of human functioning are recommended by intellectuals after the development of applied

sciences. This paper aims at studying human thought at various levels to analyse the way society interpreted the role of women in civilization, and how the trend might change in future.

Periyar from Tamil Nadu was the earliest social reformer who questioned the enslavement of women in family system right from 1940s. Indian society applied the concept of *karpu* for only women, and men were indirectly permitted to practice polygamy. The woman had to be monogamous and the man is given the social permission to be free.

The religious codes and laws that expect a woman to put up with her husband in spite of him behaving like an animal in the name of *karpu* (a woman loyal to her husband and chaste always) have to change. The social situation in which a woman is forced to live with her husband without love for him should change. (Periyar 13)

Periyar came under the impact of western intelligentsia as after the eighteenth century, Europe began arguing that women have to be given equal rights and freedom to think on her own, as only freedom will give her the ability to redesign her role in society.

“And how can woman be expected to cooperate unless she knew why she ought to be virtuous? Unless freedom strengthen her reason till she comprehend her duty, and see in what manner it is connected with her real good?” (Wollstonecraft 4) Will freedom strengthen the reasoning power of any marginalized human being and give him the capacity to become dutiful? This question has been taken up by political thinkers for quite some time.

Humanity has created a familial and social structure in which “females have been insulated” and “stripped of the virtues that should clothe humanity” and “have been decked with artificial graces that enable them to exercise a short-lived tyranny.” Their purpose in life “is to be fair, to raise emotion instead of inspiring respect.” As this can be viewed as an “ignoble desire” because it denotes and signifies “servility in absolute monarchies” and “destroys all strength of character” in women. This role in civilization has made women play the role of “exotics” and are “reckoned beautiful flaws in nature” (Wollstonecraft 39).

Marriage became the only profitable career in the establishment of family system and material success for women in the family system, and to have a successful career a woman had to

“marry advantageously” and to reach this goal “their time is sacrificed.” They are expected to practice the art of giving pleasure to men retain their career (Wollstonecraft 66). Marriage is a full time job for women and they have to compete with fellow women constantly to retain their position in retaining monogamy, and this ambiguous position has situated them in a very different from men’s social position as men fight for intellectual recognition.

... they (women) are all rivals. Before marriage it is their business to please men; and after, with a few exceptions, they follow the same scent with all the persevering pertinacity of instinct. Even virtuous women never forget their sex in company, for they are for ever trying to make themselves agreeable. A female beauty, and a male wit, appear to be equally anxious to draw the attention of the company to themselves; and the animosity of contemporary wits is proverbial. (Wollstonecraft 210)

“Women are people with rational thinking” (Periyar 16). They have the same expectations to get social and political power. Studies are required at an inter-disciplinary level to examine the differences between man’s perception of power and woman’s perception of power. Social and political role-play could just be one of the many reasons for a development of female role in societies. The female animal might have special characteristics that may influence its thinking styles and approaches to life.

In the game of life and biological competition, the female of the species aims at achieving attractiveness and beauty to please the male counterparts. This beauty aimed by the female does not reach the height of artistic immortality, as it is biological and short lived, and hence the political power of women over men is indeed only for a certain period only if it is based on biological aspect, and it reflected on her financial power too.

Beauty... or artistic beauty at any rate, is a route from the sensuous and particular to the Absolute and to freedom, from finitude to the infinite, formulations that... influenced by Schiller—strikingly recall Shaftesbury, Plotinus, and Plato. Hegel, who associates beauty and art with mind and spirit, holds with Shaftesbury that the beauty of art is higher than the beauty of nature, on the grounds that, as Hegel puts it, “the beauty of art is born of the spirit and born again” ... This idea reaches is

apogee in Benedetto Croce, who very nearly denies that nature can ever be beautiful, or at any rate asserts that the beauty of nature is a reflection of the beauty of art. “The real meaning of ‘natural beauty’ is that certain persons, things, places are, by the effect which they exert upon one, comparable with poetry, painting, sculpture, and the other arts.” (Sartwell)

Compared to this brief period of political power through beauty, men have a longer duration of political power through their intellectual achievements which might be with them till the end in most of the cases. In a knowledge economy dictated by global capitalism, women also have acquired political and financial power through their intellectual contributions. Similarly, with the advent of the camera and new social professions, men are entering into the beauty frame to acquire political and financial power. Men are also developing and expanding their horizons.

The rights of women as I perceive is to make sure that men accept that women have the same emotions like them – courage, capacity, anger and leadership. Also, for the development of human societies, both the sexes have to grow in an equal manner. Nature has given both the sexes the space to develop themselves in the same manner. (Periyar 19-20)

Business marketing strategies use people’s preference for seeing beautiful people and beautiful things to make money and create better opportunities for materialistic success. Capitalistic economy “uses beauty” as a tool “to manipulate people into buying things.” The eighteenth century French intelligentsia “associated beauty with the French aristocracy and with the Rococo style of the French royal family.” They critiqued the idea of beauty from a moral perspective. The 20th century perceived beauty as a tool for marketing and the intelligentsia perceived that “even great art appeared to be dedicated mainly to furnishing the homes of rich people, with the effect of concealing the suffering they were inflicting” (Sartwell).

Beauty came to be interpreted on Freudian terms denoting pleasure derived by looking in American movies and for achieving this purpose, women’s bodies were exposed – a direct capitalistic strategy to create a market for movies using the concept of beauty as understood by men, and exhibited by women’s bodies perfect in shape and symmetry.

“Art historians such as Linda Nochlin (1988) and Griselda Pollock (1987) brought such insights to bear on the history of painting” that thrived on showing the beautiful bodies of women exposed to male gaze. “The classical conception is that beauty consists of an arrangement of integral parts into a coherent whole, according to proportion, harmony, symmetry, and similar notions” and this western conception of beauty “is embodied in classical and neo-classical architecture, sculpture, literature, and music wherever they appear. Aristotle says in the *Poetics* that “to be beautiful, a living creature, and every whole made up of parts, must ... present a certain order in its arrangement of parts.” And in the *Metaphysics*: “The chief forms of beauty are order and symmetry and definiteness, which the mathematical sciences demonstrate in a special degree” (Sartwell).

Women’s beauty, symmetrical and well – ordered and well-balanced in structure, not only has helped women themselves in particular situations to promote their financial and political power, but also has been continuously used by capitalists to present it as a tool for expanding wealth and other similar exploitations by the powerful agents of high materialism. Hence, it has put them in a subservient position in socio-political sphere, which is controlled and operated by the world of men who perceived beauty as an inferior quality used by women to promote themselves though there were pleased by it.

The cinema satisfies a primordial wish for pleasurable looking, but it also goes further, developing *scopophilia* in its narcissistic aspect. The conventions of mainstream film focus attention on the human form. Scale, space, stories are all anthropomorphic. Here, curiosity and the wish to look intermingle with a fascination with, likeness and recognition: the human face, the human body, the relationship between the human form and its surroundings, the visible presence of the person in the world. (Mulvey)

Humanity exploits human or animal labour to its benefit unlike other animals. Men produce art that is beautiful and fantastic in nature. They produce beauty in a structured manner. Beauty, as an ideology, has ugliness right behind, following it like a shadow. One does not exist without the other. Where do we locate women in this structure operated by society? A woman emerges as a mainstream beautiful product, created for giving pleasure to some sections or someone. The ugly

shadow of old age and losing symmetry and order haunts her, and male philosophy and perception taunts her for her affiliation to her appearance and her obsession with her physical self, instead of core areas of thought which dominate men's consciousness. She ends up echoing male ideologies, without realizing how these work against her.

man produces even when he is free from physical need and only truly produces in freedom therefrom...man freely confronts his product... man knows how to produce in accordance with the standard of every species, and knows how to apply everywhere the inherent standard to the object. Man therefore also forms objects in accordance with the laws of beauty...Political economy conceals the estrangement inherent in the nature of labor by not considering the direct relationship between the worker and production. It is true that labor produces for the rich wonderful things – but for the worker it produces privation. It produces palaces – but for the worker, hovels. It produces beauty – but for the worker, deformity. (Marx)

If a woman tries to imitate a good looking film star, the male gaze laughs at her, as it knows that she is taking all these extra efforts to please the male mind, acknowledging its political power and superiority. The idea that someone is taking a lot of efforts to please him, gives the male ego a sufficient uplift. The beauty of the woman has to be spontaneous, original and definitely not duplicate any other image. There is a need to fulfill the reader or audience – a woman has to present herself as an original piece of art. Ugliness is always around the corner that can mar the beauty of the woman anytime – even with a small slip. A woman is always under pressure in society to perform with her body.

The face of the most beautiful girl becomes ugly by a striking resemblance to the face of a film star on whom it was carefully modeled: Even when nature is experienced as spontaneously individuated, as if it were protected from administration, the deception is predictable. Natural beauty, in the age of its total mediatedness, is transformed into a caricature of itself; not the least of the causes for this is the awe felt for natural beauty, which imposes asceticism on its contemplation for as long as it is overlaid with images of being a commodity. Even in the past the portrayal of nature was probably only authentic as nature morte: when painting knew to read nature as the cipher of the historical, if not as that of

the transience of everything historical. The Old Testament prohibition on images has an aesthetic as well as a theological dimension. That one should make no image, which means no image of anything whatsoever, expresses at the same time that it is impossible to make such an image. Through its duplication in art, what appears in nature is robbed of its being-in-itself, in which the experience of nature is fulfilled. (Adorno 67)

The capitalistic society that has made maximum wealth out of cosmetic industry constantly mocks at women for using makeup. The ambiguity in women's roles in society has made her position fluid, at the mercy of market forces and societal forces from which she has not managed to liberate herself. "All over the world women have been enslaved in the name of marriage" (Periyar 32). The roles of women have not been clearly defined and women are expected to be wives, remain beautiful, bring forth children and so on and so on. She has to present herself in an artistic manner, and be a wife and perform her duties too. "The identification of art with beauty is inadequate" (Adorno 273). The same concept of beauty is handled by art in a clear manner as philosophers have separated one from the other, and this has not happened in the lives of women. Art has accepted realism, whereas a woman's real self and physique is not accepted as beautiful. She is enslaved in the name of marriage, and is expected to perform multiple roles.

Realism in Indian art, after western Marxism, began portraying pain and suffering and ugliness of poverty as great art. *The Santhal Family* is a "sculpture by Ramkinkar Baij from Shantiniketan that depicts the agony and suffering of the tribes" (Jain 110). In modern Indian art, ugliness of poverty has been accepted as divine, whereas, the biological beauty of women never managed to become an art. Indian Sanskrit aesthetics defined dramatic art, classifying its capacity to evoke nine types of emotions. Of these, *Shringara* is considered to be the most important evoking love and beauty. It assumes that beauty evokes love. A woman's beauty and the evoked romance and love are systematized in Indian dramatic art, that is mainstream in nature, in an indirect manner. The unwritten codes of thousands of Indian dances of tribals and other sections of society do not come under this definition. Written Sanskrit codes for dance drama or drama or dances had designed these principles for elite viewers, generally speaking. Indian hierarchical

social structure defined a section of women who excelled in this art of pleasing viewers following the principles of these theories.

It is the *rasa* of love, beauty, art and divinity, which is the very essence of life and the purpose of creation and universe. It is the peak of emotions in Indian aesthetics that defines the basis of humanity – the celebration of life, besides evocating divinity in an individual... It is referred to as the king of the sentiments (*Rasaraja*); as the lord of all sentiments (*Rasapati*); writers vie in praising it... Rudrata says “no other *rasa* is capable of producing that bliss of pleasure which the *Shringara rasa* does.” Anandavardhana quotes: “*Shringara rasa* alone is the sweetest and the most exhilarating of all *rasa*.” Bhojraja says “*Shringara* is the supreme *rasa* and it is the synonym of self and ego.” Viswanath has accredited that “*Shringara rasa* is universal and that almost all the *Sanchari Bhavas* lead to *Shringara rasa*.” (Pathloth)

Indian dramatic art defines “*Sambhoga*” or “love in union” that is “stimulated by beauty, pleasant atmosphere, romantic music, erotic fragrance, sweet and tempting words” and other similar situations. Dance presents this human experience “through graceful movements of the limbs accompanied by sweet smiles” and “*Sambhoga Shringara* is expressed” through gestures like “side glances, graceful steps and gestures” (Pathloth).

Ancient Indian Sanskrit written aesthetic principles aimed at giving pleasure to the viewer and has been structured as an art that has been created to excite human emotions with reference to happiness emphasizing on *Shringara* that celebrated life, while the Greek aesthetic principles recommended high seriousness evoking pity and fear. Greek definitions written before the Common Era dismissed myths and Gods appearing in epics and recommended the reality of plays that were fitted within a real time frame. Both Sanskrit and Greek principles ultimately reflected an already existing social system in which the woman’s body has been projected as an agency in art to give pleasure to the audience, in spite of the obvious differences in their definitions of art. The modern working woman has not managed to escape from this social structure of getting herself ready to please the viewer. Public opinion in any civilization, whether written or not, has always made it clear that a woman has to be pleasing to the eye. After women acquired financial and

political power, they did not adapt to the changes, rather, they did not respond to the changes in society, or they chose to ignore them as they still had the responsibility of sustaining monogamy at the familial level, keeping up the respect in their male colleagues' eyes, keeping up the same in their female colleagues' male perception and so on. Career women have now become the rich clients of market forces of cosmetic industry and social perception. Their financial power has not liberated them from the power of male gaze of men and male gaze of women. Educated women expect other women to look perfect, ordered, symmetrical and look like well-made and well-structured dolls – their attention is on human form. Their male gaze controls and operates the environment and supports the cosmetic industry as never before, defying Mary Wollstonecraft's dream of liberation and freedom. Human societies are operated by forces beyond the concept of freedom, and women want to get political, social and financial power by compelling themselves to fulfill the role given to them by social laws. More inter-disciplinary research would be required to find out why women use any new technology to maintain their traditional outlook of attempting to keep a perfect body. It might have something to do with the sustainability of the human race and fertility. The importance given to the female body could be the reflection of its ability to conceive a child, rear it well and sustain the next generation and compete with all other animals in dominating the earth. A woman's body gains significance from this biological perspective, and this can be studied to understand women's choices.

A New York woman describes the beauty pattern of a typical career woman, who spends almost “nearly a quarter of her \$60,000 income... on self preservation” (Wolf, 1990). A former editor of *Vogue* complains how “women are punished for their looks, whereas men can go far in just a grey flannel suit.” A woman corroborates that her estimated expense in beauty maintenance is almost \$8000 annually (Wolf, 1990). Therefore, cosmetics began to be seen as a mandate in the beauty regime of women. (Sharma 116)

Science and technology has not broken the existing social, perhaps, biological law and has instead succumbed to it. Along with the choice to maintain a perfect form, another social law of perceiving the fair skin as beautiful – a racial discrimination – woven into human mind and well-hidden in technological advances.

The camera does not pick up the dark skins and the latest discrimination encouraged men to add-on to their discrimination against the dark skinned woman who came to be branded as unattractive. Very few African women did emerge as top models and that was an exception. The camera has been designed with a white skin as a base model that was embedded. Roth's research used "the emblematic "Shirley" norm reference card as a central metaphor reflecting the changing state of race relations/aesthetics" and traced "the colour adjustment processes in the industries of visual representation and identifies some prototypical changes in the field" (Roth).

Until recently, due to a light-skin bias embedded in colour film stock emulsions and digital camera design, the rendering of non-Caucasian skin tones was highly deficient and required the development of compensatory practices and technology improvements to redress its shortcomings. (Roth)

The camera industry is Eurocentric and film chemistry and lab procedures and other practices assumed that the light-skin was the only colour that had to be photographed. It marginalized all the other skin tones. International colour standard was the bench mark and it was the white flesh tone of the European. The other flesh tones were considered to be deviation. White was the normal and other colours were considered abnormal. This invisible norm dictated photo technology and cameras continued to be made to capture the white skin tone only.

This, along with cross-cultural skin-colour-preference tests conducted by film manufacturers such as Kodak and Fuji, had confirmed an international preference for light complexions within the global consumer photo markets. The virtual public silence in Kodak's and Fuji's institutional discourses and professional literature on alternatives to traditional ways of colour balancing analogue prints is the most concrete evidence we have of this institutional oversight and resistance to change... Within the digital marketplace, Philips/Thomson and Ikegami were the first in the industry to risk large sums of investment capital in the recognition of a future multiracial market that will very likely expand over time as industrial globalization captures and maintains the norm in business practices. Other camera and photo companies have followed suit and are now far more conscious of the need for dynamic range in their cameras... Typically, innovation has come from the margins. (Roth)

This might explain the proliferation of makeup industry and its power over women, especially in countries in which the skin tone is darker. Multiculturalism and human perception of beauty has posed a newer challenge to women in a globalised science and technology Age. Now women have to compete with women of the west in globalised social media, and please the viewers. With more technological advancement, and with a more emphatic capitalistic society that is globalised in nature, and with a culture that has become globalised too, modern women are under more pressure to perform better with their skin tones and symmetrically designed bodies. Slowly, this has expanded to men too, as human capacity to afford the expensive cosmetic designed lives. It is probable that as women have emerged as economically powerful people, they might expect the men folk too to please society. Cosmetic industry has begun to cater to the needs of men and their body symmetry and skin tone. Economically empowered people might be willing to spend more money on their body aesthetics.

The film chemistry that creates color balance was not originally designed with yellow, brown, and reddish skin tones in mind, and such hues wouldn't even be considered until the 1970s. For Concordia University professor Lorna Roth's 2009 research on the equity of image technologies, she spoke with Earl Kage, the former head of the Color Photo Studio at Kodak Park during the 1960s and 1970s and former Manager of Kodak Research studios. Kage shared with Roth that, at the time, companies that sold furniture and chocolate raised concerns with Kodak because "they were having a good deal of difficulty" in differentiating wood grains, and the film was failing to distinguish "the subtle variations" between dark, bittersweet, and milk chocolates in photographs. The subsequent inclusion of darker skin tones on Kodak's color film wasn't necessarily a consideration at all — rather, the by-product of solving an advertising dilemma. (Mcnab)

Commerce and types of businesses and newly created industries have transformed human notions quite naturally. Families have accepted cosmetically designed lives as an integral part of their lives. Beauty is slowly undergoing a change as a concept that once was applied only to women as long as they were dependent on men for materialistic benefits. When the tables are turned, ideologies too get transformed. When women have emerged as economic superiors, aesthetics of bodies also have begun to change. Like caste and class are on one side strengthened consciously

and on the other side have lost their edge in food habits, culture, life styles and art, beauty as a concept has begun to expand to all sexes. Racism affects men and women and colourism also affects them both, and now ecommerce is transforming lives across the world.

The time is not far away when the beauty segment for men will emerge from the shadows of the female beauty range, the average male is now interested to take greater care. The age of information is already drawing in the younger generation who are more inclined toward self-care and grooming, this is evident in the greater growth of intimate hygiene products. Herbal and natural skin care products are another segment that is seeing a rapid expansion. E-commerce is likely to drive the growth of the segment in India where higher disposable incomes and greater affordability of the products is likely to drive the growth in the coming few years. With increasing acceptability, the growth of sales in other distribution channels like pharmacies and convenience stores is set to increase further. (Sakuja)

Earlier, men viewed women as other species and wrote on them based on what they saw or what they chose to see. Human opinions and views came to be accepted as truth, but these two thousand years of writing expanded to millions of people, both men and women, have brought in changes. History has taken two millennia to include women in education and till then intellectuals have constantly analysed their roles in civilization. Women intellectuals are changing knowledge patterns and more enquiries are conducted in much ignored areas. In another thousand years, if woman intelligentsia is still around in mainstream academic and research, human perceptions might undergo major innovative changes, and these innovations can come from any part of the world.

Wherefore women are more compassionate and more readily made to weep, more jealous and querulous, more fond of railing, and more contentious. The female also is more subject to depression of spirits and despair than the male. She is also more shameless and false, more readily deceived, and more mindful of injury, more watchful, more idle, and on the whole less excitable than the male. On the contrary, the male is more ready to help, and, as it has been said, more brave than the female; and even in the malacia, if the sepia is struck with a trident, the male comes to help the female, but the female makes her escape if the male is struck. (Aristotle)

Serious discussions have taken place amidst Greek male intelligentsia as to the types of education to be extended to women. Greek philosophy tried to locate the role of women in city states; its quest was to find out if women can be treated on par with men so that they can serve the country like men. Education shifted completely in its structure from Aristotle's times and the universities all over the world have brought forth thousands of intelligent women scholars to the mainstream. A new profession called nursing, an innovative idea in the history of world, brought women to the war field who served the wounded soldiers.

Socrates: Then, if women are to have the same duties as men, they must have the same nurture and education? ...The education which was assigned to the men was music and gymnastics... Then women must be taught music and gymnastic and also the art of war, which they must practice like the men?... I should rather expect that several of our proposals, if they are carried out, being unusual, may appear ridiculous...Yes, and a ridiculous thing of all will be the sight of women naked in the gym, exercising with the men, especially when they are no longer young; they certainly will not be a vision of beauty, any more than the enthusiastic old men who in spite of wrinkles and ugliness continue to frequent the gymnasia... First, then, whether the question is to be put in jest or in earnest, let us come to an understanding about the nature of woman: Is she capable of sharing either wholly or partially in the actions of men, or not at all? And is the art of war one of those arts in which she can or cannot share? That will be the best way of commencing the inquiry, and will probably lead to the fairest conclusion." (Plato. Republic V. 1080)

The body of the woman is an object that gives pleasure only when it is youthful, and even the philosophers are not able to think differently from the existing social thought. The woman has absorbed this perception of men - who have established their materialistic power over them - which she notices in their eyes when they evaluate her in all negotiations with each other. Her beauty and symmetry are weighed and ranked by default and the cosmetic industry has boomed because of this behavioural and thinking pattern. After women have established their materialistic power, social perception will change, as social structures are swept away by economical changes. Woman, who is marginalized now, might come up with ideas to get materialistic power. Established routine thoughts, written down or not, will change and transform triggered by economic necessities. New

businesses are established as the world economic order changes, and new social orders will be created. Society is more fluid than it appears to our perception, and colliding and blending take place all the time. There is an increase in infertility clinics, and soon women might develop a female gaze and might expect their men to have style and grace apart from masculinity and body power. Mankind keeps transforming, adapting silently and understanding these shifts would involve holistic researches, involving economics, political philosophy, biology and even science and technology.

Contrary to Marxist assumptions, the market does not commodify every aspect of human life... items proscribed at one point in time can later become routine commodities. Zelizer (1978) traces the case of life insurance, which early nineteenth-century Americans saw as sacrilege, or at best gambling, but which by the late 1800s had established itself as a breadwinner's obligation. She notes that the insurance industry, to achieve this transformation, made use of religious language and secured the support of clergy who urged on their flocks the necessity of providing for family after death, making this a sacred duty. This personal connection seemed indispensable in attaching ritual and symbolic significance to this otherwise rather bloodless commodity ... the socially marginal may at times be best placed to break away from established practice, as they are not involved in dense, cohesive social networks of strong ties that create a high level of consensus on such practice... studies indicate that the lower an innovation's champion in a corporate hierarchy, the more radical the innovation... innovation means breaking away from established routines. (Granovetter 44, 45, 46)

The socially marginalised child brides in India did not go through the tonsuring of their heads after their husband's death. It is quite common to notice in villages widows remarrying, or one-woman leaving husband for another and vice versa from time immemorial. The higher a family's political and financial power was, the stricter the rules were applied for women from such environment. Similarly, the thousands of rules and regulations applied to certain sections of Indian women were not extended to the marginalised women, ironically. India has witnessed different types of women oppression in the name of religion, high quality, superiority and other cultural codes, and untouchability, and these areas require extensive sociological research.

Globalization has quietly transformed familial behavioural patterns though it is not much discussed in mainstream discourses that present tradition as superior to contemporary reality that has let in intellectual women in mainstream political and financial discourses and negotiations. In families, women have silently done away with customs or have adapted them to suit the current situation - systems that are socially complex to practice. The marginalised women have other types of oppression and constantly strive to overcome them just like their men folk.

“In general life, society, law and religion women have to enjoy the comforts and rights enjoyed by men. Only then women will become happy and achieve their desires” (Periyar 44). In both mainstream and the peripherals, women have to be given equal treatment as human beings, and this would be the next level of human evolution. Women have been enslaved by society so that she takes care of the domestic sphere and lets men live their lives in society, and women have not been treated as fellow human beings. Twentieth century witnessed colonialism in India that became favourable to Indian women of the mainstream and marginalized cultures, as these women otherwise, would not have studied and entered knowledge economy with more confidence.

In India, colonial negotiations with European Enlightenment philosophy produced thinkers and reformers like Periyar who changed the lives of women in the southern parts of India. “Men are not branded as prostitutes in society...Prostitution is a career for women only...Men are proud to get pleasure from these so called inferior women....Men involved with such women are respected by society” (Periyar 46).

Society created ‘pleasure giving’ as a profession and did not look down on the men who went seeking for pleasure; instead, it blamed women for giving pleasure to men. Beauty, hailed as a ‘pleasure giving’ phenomenon, was condemned when women used it to give pleasure for a payment. Now, women acquire financial power through formal education, and now women have to think seriously to stay on in social power and become succumbed to the trigger of male gaze that will encourage women to get back to their earlier powerless situation. “Prostitution and *karpu* are words created to enslave women” (Periyar 47). The former will enslave the inferior placed women – women who can be bought – and the latter will enslave family women. Indian society

enslaved women of both types. The former had a career and was paid. The latter took up the unpaid job of rearing children, house management and planning and operating household economics.

“Cunning men have created social practices for their convenience as they wished; these practices will bring forth unnecessary problems to the world in general; will enslave women and block the development of human intelligence” (Periyar 50). Ethics and codes have been designed by street smart people who did not hesitate to enslave fellow human beings for their benefits. This human selfishness is behind age-old social and political codes. When we think of equality and freedom as demanded by Mary Wollstonecraft, we also have to think of Periyar’s views on men and their strategies to enslave women. If we extend Periyar’s ideas a little, we might perceive how racial slavery also was designed by human selfishness for material success. Any slavery, thus, becomes an operating tool for an economic benefit. In globalised societies, women are now entering into careers and businesses, because their families have realized the economic potential of women’s education. Periyar’s arguments are relevant and reasonable to understand the way mankind viewed women as agencies that would serve men both inside the house and outside the house.

Devadasi (women who serve men in society physically in the name of God) system has been institutionalized as a profession. Other professions employ tools like ‘lies’ to succeed, and still command respect. By women who have taken up the job of devadasi, just another profession, are not respected....If this system is blocking the empowerment of women, we have to throw it away in a bold manner and go ahead, and this is the duty of honest and hardworking people. (Periyar 52)

This is human contradiction – one of the ways in which human mind is constructed. It devises methods and it is not able to treat all methods in the same manner. Women doubly enslaved in society in their socially acknowledged age-old professions as well as their unpaid jobs at home. Women empowerment will stay on or be removed depending on the way economics, science and technology and other socio-political ideologies will direct human thought all the time trying to sustain human existence on earth which is the mightiest force from which no ideology can escape.

In India, untouchability and enslavement of women are evils that have to be rectified immediately. These two practices prove that Indians do not have freedom for themselves and behave like slaves. Still, we believe such practices will die in course of time (Periyar 65-66).

Perhaps, thousand or more years of extensive story constructions by writers, who could write and then spread it through lectures and other media, have built in Indian minds the sensibility that caste is real. These stories justified untouchability and the inferiority of women subtly. Caste hierarchy and female suppression have engraved themselves in India and the following are their faces:

1. Horoscopes that describe human beings and classify the features of women suitable for marriage and so on, and these are now part of upper and middle class cultures.
2. Temple architecture that permits only the few selected ones inside.
3. Banning of inter-clan marriages
4. Mainstream oppression of its women in the name of rituals that expect a woman to be a non-entity.
5. Colonial celebration, contestation and finally its acceptance of caste as a system and a social reality.
6. German academia's celebration Sanskrit's philosophy of life that reinforced caste hierarchy and racial superiority.

When caste is accepted by educated people, by default the educated woman is accepted as an inferior species. Even if she holds very high positions in wealth, career and knowledge, if she is a widow, she will not be permitted to be part of social and religious rituals, just like an untouchable.

It is a tragic thing that women from middle and upper classes do not have property rights and the dowry they bring to their husband's family is operated by the men of the family. Ironically, the women who are marginalized as *devadasis* have property rights. These poor women have more independence than the women from higher classes. Women have to defend themselves and not wait for men to solve their problems (Periyar 69).

It is quite ironical that women from the mainstream classes support caste system that is controlled by the religious system, not realizing that they have been victimized by their classes, or perhaps, they do not really mind their inferior role authenticated by their religious leaders or they have chosen to self-deceive themselves. They do not seem to mind their oppression in family system or in their minuscule domestic sphere, as perhaps they feel that the same religious systems give them the facility to command power over a larger section of men and women in general society, and are looked up as superior beings belonging to higher castes.

Indian society in the last thousand years has solidified caste hierarchy and gender hierarchy so effectively that now people find it very difficult to operate equality, brought in by the colonizer, and great writing efforts are continuously taken to prove western ideologies like egalitarianism and inclusion are wrong, though used as a social front for maintaining political imagery and posing to be presented across the world in a globalised economy that demands that we fall in line with the rest of the world ideologically. It operates between the past and future, wanting to keep a powerful patriarchy and a powerful elite social order controlling and dictating to women, tribes and other inferior people and make use of globalised commerce, science and technology and become a developed nation that is hierarchical. It is planning to operate democracy in a hierarchical model.

Contextualized thus, Indian women have the responsibility of not only getting equality for themselves in domestic sphere, but also give equality to others in public sphere. Society will observe how women are operating their political power, and this might direct the future position of women in Indian society as well as in general. If women want to claim equality with her superiors (as per social perception), and superiority over her inferiors (again as per social perception), her ideological grounding will come under the critical scanner, and might shape public and scholarly opinion which might redirect social structures to adapt to her new self. Society has perceived certain sections as superior and certain other sections as inferiors and women have to keep in mind that they too are perceived as inferiors by society. Women have to operate their power keeping the power of human perception, its ability to create stories, repeat them and reinforce them continuously and finally make them appear as truth. Her war and contestation would not only be with the male perception but also with female perception.

Innovations will gradually appear, from the minds of women themselves to tackle this intricately designed complexity. Educated and empowered women have to balance patriarchy on one side and untouchability on the other side. This situation is a contemporary site for human evolution, and we have to observe the way humanity evolves accommodating equality with meritocracy. Are all people equal? Are men and women equal? These are contemporary questions to be pondered upon seriously. One or two thousand years have created systems reflecting human perceptions, and the next millennium might change human perceptions completely, bringing newer systems of thought. Ideologies are fluid in state, and hence, systems too are fluid. Our vision has to scan thousands of years, and we will be able to see the ever-changing quality of structures that are man-made. Stories mimic each other and merge across geographical locations; languages mimic each other and merge and re-create themselves; ideologies and any culture too go through the same through migrations and travel, and also merge across the globe and innovation and recreation are permanent processes.

It is said by researchers that “worldwide over 260 million people suffer from discrimination based on caste” and it “affects some 20–25 percent of the world’s population.” The “intersecting nature of identities (caste, class, gender, religion) that give poverty in India its distinctive social face means that ultimately caste cannot be independently examined.” India’s “capital wealth” is “largely in the hands of the upper castes, and the lowest castes participate in the economy primarily as wage laborers.” Statistics tell us that in “India the caste into which a person is born remains among the most important determinants of life opportunity.” Politically and legally reservations are arranged but everyone knows “the role of caste in the informal structures of the economy.” Still “more of those who remain in poverty are Dalits and Adivasis, especially women among them” and thus one might surmise that “caste is not an archaic ritual system but a dynamic aspect of modern economies” (Mosse).

Just as patriarchy has been established with significant economic advantages, caste also gives economic benefits to the middle classes and upper classes. Hence, changing these systems would only be the result of another economic system which might bring forth changes in the existing system. Caste and patriarchy are surely economic systems introduced by human thought as a self-centred and natural development in a survival mode, and in the process of human growth these systems might be replaced by newer systems, if humanity arrives at newer and more

sophisticated better economic systems. Meanwhile, newer approaches are necessary to understand human behavior towards body beauty and symmetry and its deeper resonances with the survival of the species.

Physical attractiveness has been associated with mating behavior, but its role in reproductive success of contemporary humans has received surprisingly little attention. In the Wisconsin Longitudinal Study (1244 women, 997 men born between 1937 and 1940) we examined whether attractiveness assessed from photographs taken at age ~18 predicted the number of biological children at age 53–56. In women, attractiveness predicted higher reproductive success in a nonlinear fashion, so that attractive (second highest quartile) women had 16% and very attractive (highest quartile) women 6% more children than their less attractive counterparts. In men, there was a threshold effect so that men in the lowest attractiveness quartile had 13% fewer children than others who did not differ from each other in the average number of children. These associations were partly but not completely accounted for by attractive participants' increased marriage probability. A linear regression analysis indicated relatively weak directional selection gradient for attractiveness ($\beta=0.06$ in women, $\beta=0.07$ in men). These findings indicate that physical attractiveness may be associated with reproductive success in humans living in industrialized settings. (Jokela)

Holistic and interdisciplinary approaches would be required to study human evolving and women empowerment which is also caught in caste intertwining in India. Future researches in this field would have to be inter-disciplinary, involving scholarship from multiple disciplines too if required to understand the complexity behind societal designing of roles of different types of human beings. In India, all this research would intertwine caste too, as that is the way Indian society has structured human socio-political and psychological lives.

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Influence of Family in Shaping a Person's Character Through the Novel *Heidi* by Johanna Spyri

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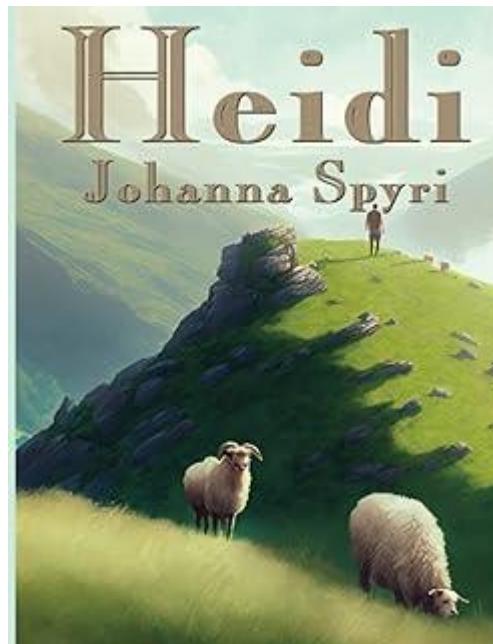
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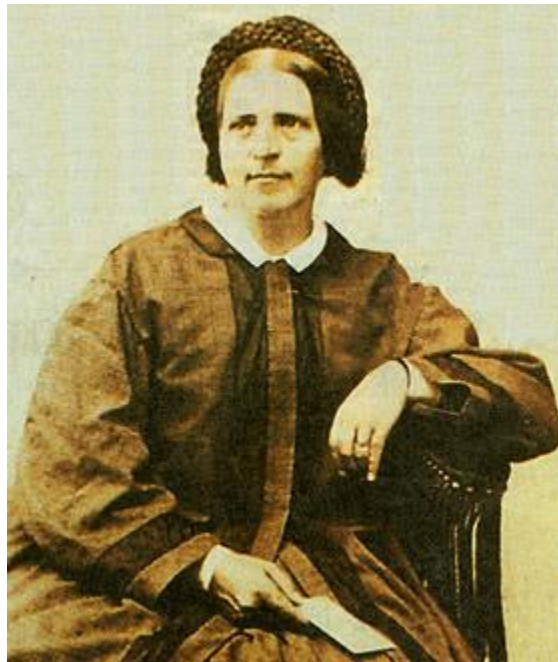
Courtesy: www.amazon.com

Abstract

This article focusses on the main character, Heidi, and analyses the family values that shaped her character, which is portrayed in the book. It reveals the family values in Heidi which

include a sense of intimacy, generosity, values, customs, estimation and thirst for knowledge, connection, conversation, and duty. These values have a significant impact on Heidi's personality, making her open minded, faithful, optimistic, sacred, sympathetic, and enthusiastic. Her family's influence and values are creating an impact on her character and behaviour. Kindness, respect, empathy, sympathy, communication, sharing, caring etc. are the qualities that she has acquired through family relations. Heidi is a kind-hearted girl, who not only considers people as a part of her family, but also animals, especially goats. This story tells about Heidi's thirst, in order to found out a peaceful family atmosphere and to imbibe the value of family in one's life. Having an intention to have a family value means to have generous behaviour, thinking, affection, courtesy, and the attitude of treating others with respect and generosity. This novel has a lighthearted ambience, presenting a pleasant and feel-good atmosphere. This study reveals the influence of family on Heidi's life and also reveals how it is creating a change in one's character.

Keywords: *Heidi*, Family, character, behaviour, nature, imbibe, generosity



Johanna Spyri, 1879

Courtesy: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johanna_Spyri

Introduction

Family is the major component in moulding a strong community. Family atmosphere and childhood that decides your character and identity within society. Family plays a crucial role when the individuals require a gathering of faithful supporters. The thing is what we think, and feel would no one cares around us, except the individuals of our families. The social intercourse within the community is the main purpose of a creator in modifying the craftsmanship of an intelligent to a proper working thing when it feels within the genuine lifestyle. Consequently, interpretation, climax, lifestyle, and miracle happening within the society will be generated inside the craftsmanship of a creator. Every writer reflects their own feelings and thoughts about society, purposely, in order to create a consciousness about society among the readers. Johanna Spyri has also done the same. By analyzing the real social condition and views, Johanna Spyri points out the real face of human life. Also, in her novel, Johanna Spyri reflects the role of family within society, in molding a human character and behaviour. In this thesis, the novel *Heidi* is presenting as an account of family relations and values.

Life of Heidi

Johanna Spyri's novel *Heidi* is a children's fiction, which tells the story of a young, orphaned girl named Heidi. After her parent's death, she was under the care of her aunt Dete. Then, her aunt makes her stay with Heidi's paternal grandfather, Alm uncle. Grandfather is a very stubborn man, who dislikes connecting with other men or the villagers. So, he settled in an odd place away from the villagers, near the mountain side. He initially didn't accept the arrival of Heidi, but her aunt cunningly makes her stay with the grandfather. Heidi soon gets into the conversation with him, and it softens his nature towards her. She also befriends Peter, a goatherd in the village. After three years, Dete, her aunt, came again to bring Heidi to Frankfurt, in order to make her a companion for a girl named Clara, who is disabled. Heidi reluctantly goes with her and stays in Frankfurt as a companion for Clara. The rude and strict housekeeper, Miss Rottenmeir, shows dislike towards Heidi, as she didn't follow the manners and rules of the city lifestyle. Soon, Heidi became homesick, and eagerly wanted to go home. He was involved in the learning of reading and writing only because she wanted to read books for Peter's blind grandmother. Her homesickness affects her mentally and physically, and it leads to sleepwalking. Clara's doctor

suggested sending Heidi back to her mountain side towards her grandfather. Her homecoming makes the loved ones feel like, are getting relief from a heavy burden. Through the letters, Heidi decides to keep in touch with her companion, Clara. The doctor that Heidi met in Frankfurt came to visit her mountainside that gives an idea for him to suggest Heidi's village's atmosphere for Clara's relief. Heidi begins to teach Peter to read and write.

Clara came and stayed with Heidi for a season, this makes Peter jealous of her. Clara became stronger with fresh goat milk and fresh air. Peter's jealousy makes him want to destroy Clara's wheelchair. It forced Clara to stand by herself without anybody's help. Heidi supported her to recover. Clara's attempt to walk, finally met with success. Clara's recovery gave joy and happiness to her grandmother and father. Clara's family made a promise to grandfather that they will take full responsibility and care of Heidi, if her grandfather is no more alive.

Heidi's story is about family values and relationships. How the environment plays a role in the recovery of mental and physical disability is a major study in this novel. How family relationships and values influence one's character and behavior, is reflected through the characters Heidi and Clara.

Family as a Reflection in Heidi's Character

Family values are reflected through the life events of Heidi and Clara. Through the dialogues and actions, we can understand how much they are attached to the people they love, through the affection of Heidi towards her mountainside, Grandfather, Peter, and the goats, we can understand how much she is connected to that atmosphere. Heidi has a sense of belonging and loving towards everybody. Mainly, it can be seen in her connection with Peter's blind grandmother. Even though she only met her a few times. Heidi created a good image in front of her. Heidi used to read her books because she is blind. So, it helps grandmother, at least, feel a sense of pleasure. Heidi came to know about her difficulty, because of the damaged atmosphere in her home, she insisted her carpenter grandfather fix that.

When she went to Frankfurt as a companion for Clara, she also focused on the thought of collecting some white bread for Peter's blind grandmother, as she asked for it. In Frankfurt, she met Clara's grandma, who is soft in behavior. Heidi finds comfort in her, and grandma's presence reminds her about the mountain, Peter's blind grandmother, and the promise that she gave to her. Before returning to the village, she collected white bread as per her promise. Unfortunately, Peter's blind grandmother passed away then. That news broke her heart. The feeling of belonging and loving towards grandmother sees in her character. The respect and obedient behavior of Heidi towards her grandfather shows love for Heidi towards her family. Heidi obeys her grandfather's words, while she goes with Peter to the mountainside. When he asks to eat dinner on time, she obeys his words respectfully. She always followed his instructions and ideas. It molded her character and behavior towards other people. She even gave respect to the elderly; it can be seen in her interaction with Peter's blind grandmother. She often went to see her, as per her wishes. She had a huge respect and love towards grandma. Heidi also shows her respectful character towards Clara's grandma, Mrs. Sesemann and towards Miss Rotenmeier, the housekeeper.

Another quality of Heidi is kindness towards human beings and other creatures like animals. When she met her grandfather in his house, he felt like this child would be an interruption for his living and even with his job. But gradually he understood that Heidi had a kind heart and empathy towards nature and its creatures. She is very kind towards her grandfather, so she obeyed him well and did nothing harm for him. She is very kind towards goats. Heidi took an interest in knowing their names. She felt like they were also a part of her daily life, Heidi called them by their names as they were also a member of her family. When Peter beat them for not obeying him, she felt empathy towards them. Heidi offered her food to Peter, to make the goats free from his beating. She didn't even feel like it was a loss.

Heidi's empathy towards Peter's blind grandmother is a notable thing. When she came to know that grandmother has insecurities at her own home, Heidi tried to resolve it with her grandfather. Heidi gets the help of her grandfather to fix the furniture and doors at her house. Heidi's empathy towards others also paved a way to cultivate kindness in grandfather's heart. Curiosity and excitement towards everything is another quality of Heidi. She always asks questions to her grandfather like a child of curiosity. When she went to the mountain for the first time, she

was curious to know about the golden shade of the mountain during sunset. Her curious mind only gets shut down, when she gets the proper and satisfying answer from her grandfather. Heidi was curious to know the names of goats, she even asks how they got the names. Curiosity and the quest for knowledge in a growing up child can be seen in her.

The connection that she created with others through communication is another example of a thing that builds her character. Peter's grandmother is blind, knowing that she is always involved in a conversation with her, so that she can inform her and to give her a proper image about the surroundings. Even though grandmother is blind, Heidi wants her to imagine the things that she explains. Grandmother also gets relief from the communication that she gets involved with Heidi. In Frankfurt, Heidi's explanation about mountains and goats cultivated excitement in Clara. Even though Clara didn't see her village, she also felt some kind of attachment to the mountainside from the conversation of Heidi. A sense of responsibility within the family can be seen in the character Dete, grandfather, Miss. Rottenmeier, Peter and Heidi. Dete has a responsibility in taking care of her sister's daughter after her death. Grandfather has the responsibility in taking care of Heidi, without anybody around her. Because of Dete's responsibility, she again came to take Heidi back with her. Miss Rottenmeier has the responsibility of taking care of the house, and Clara's education, as well as Heidi's education. As a home keeper, she is responsible for that in the absence of the Sesemann family. Peter is the bread maker of his family, so he worked hard to earn money for food. Heidi has the responsibility to obey her grandfather's words, she also felt like her responsibility is to keep the promise with Peter's blind grandmother. That's why she returned to her village with white bread for Peter's grandmother, as she asked for it. Family plays an important role in shaping Heidi's character.

Conclusion

The value of a family is reflected through the character, Heidi. Her behaviour in every situation is an example of how much she gets attached to the values that she got from her family. The kindness, politeness, respect, empathy, communication, quest for knowledge, etc. are some of the qualities that she received from the family she is around with. Heidi is a young orphan girl,

who was under the care of her aunt. And later she was in the care of her grandfather, near a mountainside. There she was surrounded with nature, flowers, trees, animals, especially goats. She considered them as a part of her family. She befriends everybody with kindness and softness in her behaviour. For Heidi, all the creatures in the world are a part of her family. The qualities that shaped her character are not only derived from the people around her, but also from nature and surroundings. Her life became an example of what we have acquired and adapted and will be reflected in our character. It is important to be surrounded by a healthy family atmosphere, to shape a good character.

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Exploring Botanical Nomenclature in Tamil Culture: Linguistic Insights into Plant Names

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Abstract

This research delves into the intricate world of botanical nomenclature within Tamil culture, shedding light on the linguistic transparency and cultural significance embedded within plant names. Through an analysis of five diverse plant species, including *vēlīpparutti* (*Pergularia daemia*), *pīlai* (*Aerva lanata*), *tumpai ceṭi* (*Leucas aspera*), *āṭātōṭai* (*Justicia adhatoda*), and the *toṭṭār curuṅki* (*Mimosa pudica*), this study explores the factors contributing to the naming of plants and the transparency of these names in the Tamil language. Each plant's name reflects not only its physical attributes but also its cultural context, highlighting the rich tapestry of traditions and observations woven into Tamil botanical terminology. The transparency of plant names in Tamil is a remarkable feature that facilitates communication and understanding among speakers. These names often provide vivid descriptions of the plants, allowing individuals to easily identify and recognize them in their natural environment. Through linguistic analysis and cultural interpretation, this research provides valuable insights into the intricate relationship between language, culture, and nature in the Tamil-speaking regions.

Keywords: Botanical nomenclature - linguistic transparency - *vēlīpparutti* (*Pergularia daemia*) - *pīlai* (*Aerva lanata*) - *tumpai ceṭi* (*Leucas aspera*) - *āṭātōṭai* (*Justicia adhatoda*) - *toṭṭār curuṅki* (*Mimosa pudica*)

1.0. Introduction

Botanical nomenclature is not merely a system of assigning names to plant species; it is a reflection of the intricate relationship between human societies and the natural world. The

relationship is vividly expressed in the rich tapestry of Tamil culture, where plant names are imbued with layers of linguistic nuance, cultural significance, and ecological insight. In this article, we embark on a journey through the verdant landscape of Tamil Nadu, exploring the linguistic insights and cultural revelations embedded within the names of five distinct plant species: **vēlīpparutti** (*Pergularia daemia*), **pīlai** (*Aerva lanata*), **tumpai ceṭi** (*Leucas aspera*), **āṭātōṭai** (*Justicia adhatoda*), and **toṭṭār curuṇki** (*Mimosa pudica*). Each of these plants not only holds botanical significance but also serves as a window into the rich tapestry of Tamil heritage, where names are crafted with precision to reflect the plant's characteristics, habitat, and traditional uses. Through a comprehensive analysis of these plant names, we aim to unravel the linguistic and cultural intricacies that shape Tamil botanical terminology, providing valuable insights into the dynamic interplay between language, culture, and biodiversity in the Tamil-speaking regions. This article delves into the fascinating world of Tamil botanical nomenclature, where every plant name tells a story steeped in tradition, observation, and reverence for the natural world.

1.1. vēlīpparutti (*Pergularia Daemia*)

Pergularia daemia, commonly known as trellis-vine, is a perennial vine belonging to the family Asclepiadaceae. This plant has a long history of traditional use in treating various ailments, not only in India, but also in some other parts of the world (Odugbemi et al., 2006). In Tamil, it is referred to as **vēlīpparutti**. Other Tamil names for this plant include **uttamamākāṇi**, **uttamakkaṇṇikai**, **accāṇi mūli**, and **uttamatāḷi** among others. The Tamil lexicon has documented a total of 28 different names for this plant from various Tamil literary works.

The name **vēli parutti** is the combination of **vēli** + **paruti** where **vēli** signifies fence and **parutti** denotes cotton plant. **vēli parutti** commonly found growing on fences and is characterized by its climbing nature and fruit-bearing capabilities. Upon reaching maturity, the fruits of the **vēlīpparutti** burst open, releasing long, white fibrous seeds that are dispersed by the wind, allowing the plant to spread to nearby areas.

The term **parutti** typically refers to the cotton plant, a commercially cultivated crop in fields, with **panju** being the term specifically for cotton known for its distinctive white color. Due to the similarity in appearance and lightweight fiber resembling cotton, it aptly referred to *Pergularia daemia* as **vēli parutti** a name that literally translates to "cotton plant on the fences."

This name highlights the plant's tendency to grow on fences and its resemblance to cotton, emphasizing its familiar presence in the local environment.

1.2. pīlai (Aerva Lanata)

Aerva lanata, also known as erva lanata or mountain knotgrass, stands as a notable botanical specimen within the family Amaranthaceae. This plant occasionally displays flowering behavior within its initial year of growth (Wikipedia: 2023).

Thriving across the plains of India, Aerva lanata is recognized as a common weed boasting distinctive characteristics. Its roots emit a fragrance reminiscent of camphor, while the dried flowers, resembling soft spikes, are commercially known as Buikallan and Boor (Ibid). Culturally, it holds significance among the ten sacred flowers of Kerala, earning a place within the revered Dasapushpam (Ibid).

This plant typically reaches a height of 1 to 2 feet and features small leaves at the nodes of its stem. Delicate, white, odorless flowers lacking nectar are situated at the base of the leaf vein. In Tamil, it is commonly referred to as *pūlāppū*. Additional names include *tēṅkāyppūk kīrai*, *cīrupīlai*, *poṅkappū*, *cīrukaṇpīlai*, *pīlaicāri*, *kaṇpēti*, *pāṣāṇapēti*, and *kaṇpīlai*.

In the Madurai district of Tamil Nadu, this botanical marvel is known by the names of *poṅkappū*, *kūrappū*, and *cīrukaṇ pīlappū*, each representing a unique facet of local culture and tradition. Through a metonymic twist, the flower embodies the essence of its parent plant.

poṅkappū, upon closer scrutiny, reveals its composition as *poṅkal* + *pū*, merging the revered harvesting festival of Tamil culture, *poṅkal*, with *pū*, signifying flower. The literal interpretation renders it as 'the flower of Pongal,' symbolizing the commencement of the festival and adorning cattle and their surroundings with festive grandeur.

kūrappū, dissected as *kūra* + *pū*, intricately weaves together the concept of the thatched roof (*kūra*) and the delicate bloom (*pū*). It embodies the notion of 'the flower of the roof,' earned through its customary placement atop household entrances, symbolizing auspicious beginnings.

ciRu kaṇ pīlai pū, a linguistic masterpiece born of imagination and observation, comprises *ciRu* + *kaṇ* + *pīlai* + *pū*, eloquently marrying the notions of smallness, eyes, the white mass within them, and the ethereal bloom. This intricate comparison between the plant's leaves and human

eyes, coupled with the resemblance of the flowers to the white mass, bestows upon it the evocative epithet of **ciRu kaṇ pīlai pū**, a testament to the poetic brilliance inherent in local vernacular.

karpēti: This name derives from its notable ability to dissolve kidney stones, as noted on wikiwand.com. Breaking down the components, **kal** meaning "stone" and **pēti** suggesting "dysentery," the term implies that preparations made with this plant have the potential to dissolve and flush out kidney stones effectively.

1.3. **tumpai ceṭi** (**Leucas Aspera**)

The plant **tumpai**, scientifically known as *Leucas aspera* and belonging to the family Acanthaceae, plays a significant role in Tamil Nadu's botanical tapestry. Commonly referred to as **tumpai** or **tumba** in India, this shrub thrives in meadows and open fields, boasting three to four branches. Its elongated leaves showcase intricate camphor-like veins, while small bud-like structures transform into exquisite white flowers, adding to its allure. Throughout Tamil history, warriors proudly adorned garlands crafted from these flowers, symbolizing their valor during times of conflict (Tamil Lexicon). Even today, the flower's color and delicate texture retain cultural significance in contemporary Tamil Nadu.

In rural landscapes, children delight in the whimsical pursuit of chasing butterflies as they flutter among the **tumpai** flowers, eagerly gathering nectar. From the innocent perspective of children, the **tumpai** plant becomes inseparable from the presence of butterflies, sparking the inspiration for a new name: **pāppāṭi pū ceṭi**. This fresh appellation underscores the close bond between butterflies and **tumpai** flowers, highlighting the picturesque scene of butterflies delicately perched atop the plants, savoring the sweet nectar. For children, the enchanting sight of butterflies gracefully gracing the **tumpai** flowers symbolizes the harmonious relationship between nature and everyday joys.

1.4. **āṭātōṭai** (*Justicia Adhatoda*)

The plant, *Justicia adhatoda*, commonly known as Malabar nut in English and **āṭātōṭai** in Tamil, belongs to the plant family Acanthaceae. The Tamil lexicon has referred to 22 names for this plant. Its leaves, bark, and roots, when crushed, emit a strong odor. Its leaves, flowers, and stems grow abundantly, often with long leaves resembling those of the mango tree. It has a bitter

taste. The name *āṭātōṭai* may have originated from the initial term - *āṭu toṭā*, signifying 'it won't be touched,' due to the belief that its leaves are not consumed by goats (Vikram Kumar: 2018). It is said to be transformed into *āṭātōṭai*. It is used to form live fences around gardens. In naming this plant, an external factor 'goat' is used, a notable point to consider while naming in Tamil culture, which often incorporates outside factors of a plant.

In the Madurai Tamil dialect, this plant is referred to as *āṭātōṭai* (instead of long *ō*, it is short *o*). One linguistic observation is that *toṭu* means 'touch.' In the name, *āṭātōṭai*, *toṭu* serves as the base form and stands for eating. This usage exemplifies hyperbole in linguistic terminology, a common phenomenon in Tamil. For instance, when asked if one eats fish, to answer negatively, an individual might respond, "I won't even touch fish." This illustrates how language in Tamil culture often employs exaggeration for emphasis or to convey a strong sentiment.

1.5. *toṭṭār curuṇki* (Mimosa Pudica)

The sensitive plant, scientifically known as *Mimosa pudica* and belonging to the pea family (Fabaceae), exhibits a unique behavior in response to touch and various stimuli by swiftly closing its leaves and drooping. This spiny subshrub features compound leaves. The plant's remarkable responsiveness to touch is attributed to the rapid release of water from specialized cells located at the bases of its leaflets and leaf stalks (Britannia: 2024). This rapid reaction to touch has inspired the creation of transparent names for this fascinating plant in Tamil.

In the Tamil lexicon, several terms have been listed to describe the sensitive plant or touch-me-not plant. These include *āḷvaṇaṅki*, *kācirōrttam*, *camaṅkai*, *tīrkkamūlam*, *toṭṭārcuruṇki*, *toṭṭārciṇuṅki*, *namakkāri*, and *curukki*. Among these, *toṭṭārcuruṇki* and *toṭṭārciṇuṅki* are the only spoken forms bearing the label "Loc."

2.0 The Grammar of These Names is as Follows

In these names, the first part *toṭṭār* (~ *toṭṭāl*) remains the same, and it means 'if (someone) touches the plant.'

2.1. *toṭṭārcuruṇki*: The second part of the name - *curuṇki* describes the action of shrinking, metaphorically representing the reaction of the plant's leaves as if they were shrinking in response to touch.

2.2. *toṭṭārciṇuṅki*: The second part - *ciṇuṅki* means "something which whines," suggesting a gentle cry or whimper. This part of the name extends the action of the plant's leaves gently closing to the soft cry of babies, creating an association between the plant's behavior and the sound of a baby's cry.

2.3 *toṭṭāl vāṭi*: The second part of the name *vāṭi* can be derived from *vāṭu*, meaning 'withering.' Here, the action of the plant withering is matched with another condition of the plant, without a change in domain. This structure highlights the plant's response to touch leading to its withering.

2.4 *ālvaṇaṅki*: This name is highly imaginative. It represents an assumption of a natural occurrence favoring one's own perspective. While the folding of the leaves serves to protect the plant from herbivorous animals, an individual might interpret it as the plant greeting them.

3.0. Factors Contributing to Plant Naming

The naming of plants in Tamil culture is a multifaceted process influenced by various factors, including the plant's physical attributes, its behavioral characteristics, its traditional uses, and its cultural significance. These factors converge to create names that are not only descriptive but also deeply rooted in the cultural and linguistic landscape of Tamil Nadu.

3.1. Physical Attributes: One of the primary factors contributing to plant naming is its physical appearance. Plants are often named based on their visual characteristics, such as color, shape, size, and texture. For example, the name *vēlippiarutti* for *Pergularia daemia* highlights its tendency to climb fences, while *pīlai* for *Aerva lanata* draws attention to its distinctive white flowers and small leaves.

3.2. Behavioral Characteristics: The behavior of plants also plays a significant role in their naming. Plants that exhibit unique behaviors, such as rapid leaf movement in response to touch, like the *Mimosa pudica*, inspire names that reflect these behaviors. For instance, the various names for *Mimosa pudica* in Tamil, such as *toṭṭārcuruṅki* highlight its remarkable responsiveness to touch.

3.3. Traditional Uses: The traditional uses of plants in herbal medicine and cultural practices often influence their names. Plants that have been used for centuries to treat ailments or have cultural significance are often named based on these uses. For example, the name *karpēti* for *Aerva*

lanata references its renowned ability to dissolve kidney stones, underscoring its potential medicinal properties.

3.4. Cultural Significance: Cultural beliefs, rituals, and traditions also play a role in plant naming. Plants that hold cultural significance, such as those used in religious ceremonies or festivals, may be named to reflect their importance in local customs. For example, the name *poṅkappū* for *Aerva lanata* evokes imagery of the Pongal festival, symbolizing auspicious beginnings.

4.0. Transparency in Tamil Plant Names

The transparency of plant names in Tamil is a remarkable feature that facilitates communication and understanding among speakers. These names often provide vivid descriptions of the plants, allowing individuals to easily identify and recognize them in their natural environment. For example, the name *ciRu kaṇ pīlai pū* for *Aerva lanata* vividly describes the plant's small leaves resembling human eyes and its delicate white flowers, creating a poetic and evocative image.

Furthermore, the use of metaphorical extensions and linguistic creativity in plant naming adds depth and richness to the Tamil language. By drawing parallels between plant characteristics and human experiences, these names not only convey information about the plants but also reflect the cultural values and beliefs of the Tamil-speaking community.

The naming of plants in Tamil culture is a dynamic and intricate process influenced by a myriad of factors. The transparency and linguistic creativity inherent in Tamil plant names serve as a testament to the deep connection between language, nature, and culture in the Tamil landscape.

5.0 Conclusion

The diverse array of plant names in Tamil reflects a rich tapestry of cultural, linguistic, and environmental influences. From the descriptive and functional naming of plants like *vēlipparutti* and *āṭātōṭai* to the imaginative and metaphorical naming seen in *pīlai* and the touch-me-not plant, each name captures a unique aspect of the plant's characteristics, usage, or cultural significance. The transparent nature of many of these names allows for an intuitive understanding of the plants they represent, showcasing the intricate relationship between language and the natural world.

Through the exploration of these plant names, we gain insights into Tamil culture, language dynamics, and the human propensity for creativity and interpretation in naming the world around us. As we continue to study and appreciate the richness of botanical nomenclature, we further connect with our environment and the diverse ways in which humans interact with and perceive the natural world.

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Exploitation of a Woman: A Case Study of Mahasweta Devi's Play *Bayen*

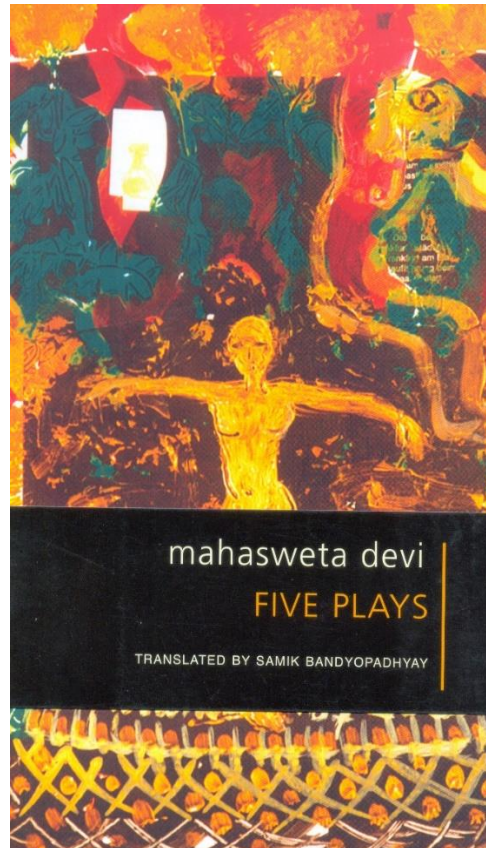
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Courtesy: <https://www.seagullbooks.org/five-plays/#details>

Abstract

Mahasweta Devi is a legendary figure among the Indian Writers. She is one of the greatest contemporary writers, who used to write in Bangla. Till the last breath of her life,

Mahasweta Devi raises her voice against illiteracy, displacement, ignorance, and other issues related to exploitation.

The Play *Bayen* was published in ‘Five Plays’, with other four plays – *Mother of 1084*, *Aajir*, *Urvanshi* and *Johnny and Water* in 1997. Mahasweta Devi’s play *Bayen* exposes exploitation of women, caste, and gender. I would like to discuss the situation of a lower caste woman Chandidasi and gender discrimination in this play. In this play, there are many dimensions, where women are shown as victims. Samik Bandyopadhyay comments on Mahasweta devi’s *Bayen*, “The metaphoric core of Bayen...lies deeper than the obvious protest against the inhumanity of superstition...Mahasweta touches the larger space of the social forces that separate mother and son in a male-dominated system”¹.

This paper attempts to see the struggling woman figure in Mahasweta Devi’s play *Bayen* and discuss how a lower caste woman is accused as a Bayen. According to village people *bayen* is a woman, who has ability to curse others and breastfeed the dead children. Chandidasi is separated from her son and family.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the identity of a woman, which is constructed by the society and fake beliefs of society.

Keywords: Mahasweta Devi, Exploitation, Gender, Feminism, Mother, Caste, Woman, *Bayen*.

Mahasweta Devi

Mahasweta Devi was born in a middle-class family in 1926 in Dhaka. Mahasweta Devi is famous for works especially for women and tribal community and poor people, who are exploited. Mahasweta Devi’s play *Bayen* was published in 1997 and was translated by Samik Bandhyopadhyay. The play *Bayen* is one of the best creations among her works. Chandidasi the main character of this play is being accused as a Bayen, who breastfeeds dead children and she also has the ability to curse others.

¹ Devi, Mahasweta. (1997). Five Plays. Trans. and Intro. Samik Bandyopadhyay. Seagull. Calcutta. pp. xviii-xix

This play deals with superstitions, where a woman is accused as a Bayen. This woman was separated from her son and her family as well as from the community because of their blind faith. This shows how sick our society is. In this play we also find glimpses of patriarchal systems.

In many rural areas of India, women are always victims of injustice and gender discrimination, and they have to live in the male dominated system. When we read Mahasweta Devi's play *Bayen*, we can find these types of discrimination, where a lower caste woman named Chandidasi struggles with superstitions and the sick mentality of people.

The Structure of the Play

In scene I, we can see Malindar (Chandidasi's husband), and how he temporarily feels guilty for misbehaving with Chandidasi.

In scene II, we see that Chandidasi begins to feel how she turns into **bayen** due to societal pressure upon her. Her state of condition depicts the conflict between personal self and societal self. By the Chandidasi's word we can see that how she started believing that she is a **bayen** "It's forbidden to talk to us ...I'm a Bayen." (Devi 1997: 88). We can see how she has forgotten her own identity.

In scene III, Devi depicts how Malindar discloses the "truth" of Chandidasi to his son Bhagirath, that she was a woman (a human) before becoming a **bayen**. At the end of this scene, her son knows the truth and the present condition of his mother and how his mother was exploited by the villagers. He asks his father Malindar "My mother? Without clothes? without food?" (Devi 1997:78)

In the concluding scene, Mahasweta Devi depicts the sacrifice of Chandidasi for the same society, by whom she was accused of being a Bayen, but her son Bhagirath identifies her as his mother and not as **bayen**.

Chandidasi

The play *Bayen* is concerned with a woman Chandidasi, who is separated from her son Bhagirath by the male dominated system. The effect of woman exploitation is revealed here.

Chandidasi is a mother and wife, who is a professional grave digger. As per the profession her work is to guard the graves and bury dead children. This profession is inherited by her from her ancestors. Because of the work she does, Chandidasi is accused as a bayen.

Chandidasi gets married to Milendar, who is a permanent employee in a morgue. She gave birth to a child. When she was unmarried, she watches the graves without any problem and she feels satisfied with her job, but after giving birth to a child Chandidasi feels deep pain for every dead child and feels restless. She finds the image of her son among dead children. She decides to leave the profession, which was handed over to her by her grandparents. She has a conflict between her profession and being a mother.

Glimpses of Patriarchal System

Chandidasi is beautiful and her husband has a government job, so all people have evil and jealous eyes on her. She is accused of being a **bayen**, and she is separated from her son Bhagirath as well her husband. She has to live according to the conventions of her society.

The play **Bayen** exposes the sad reality of our society, where a lactating woman is charged as being a **bayen**, accused of breast feeding the dead children. This woman, exploited by and exiled from village, was given rice which could not be consumed even to survive. Chandidasi describes this shocking situation:

“just a little rice... the salt all
mixed with dirt... worms in the lentil – Why should I
take it?... is that enough for a week”. (Devi 1997:75)

Bayen

The protagonist of this story Chandidasi is professional grave-digger, who buries dead children and she guards the graves at night as per her profession. In the village there was no one as beautiful as she was. She married Milinder, who works in a morgue. She gave birth to a child, named Bhagirath. After giving birth to a child, Chandidasi faces a conflict in herself between a mother’s responsibility towards her son and her ancestral accountability, which was given by the ancestors. She was charged of being a *bayen* by the community people. When

Chandidasi's sister-in-law's husband Shashi blamed her for his daughter Tukni's death, whom Chandidasi herself loved a lot.

Tukni suffered from chickenpox and died. Before Baghirath was born, she was burying dead children without any problem as part of her caste-based, inherited job, but after her own child was born, she started feeling a deep pain for every dead child. When she was guarding little Tukni's grave, her breast started aching and her sari was wet with milk and her sister-in-law's husband Shashi started calling her **bayen**. He told the villagers that Chandidasi breast-feeds the dead children and has the ability to curse others. She is not human anymore.

Chandidasi's husband also started calling her **bayen** and throwing stones at her. Afterwards, villagers assumed that Chandi is a **Bayen**, who breastfeeds and raises dead children as well as has power to curse others. Therefore, she was exiled from the village by the community people. She was separated from her son Bhagirath, was suppressed by the village people continuously but still she saved the lives of hundreds of passengers. She loses her life, while stopping a train full of passengers from disaster. She was humiliated, even denied her motherhood and separated from her son by the community people. Despite this, she willingly sacrificed her life for the sake of society. After her death she was rewarded by the society and even regained her identity as a woman or as a human being.

Superstitions

Mahasweta Devi in her short story **Bayen** portrayed the ill effects of superstition on innocent people. In India there are many places, where people are controlled by these types of superstitions and the feudal system makes their lives worsen. The rural superstitious people believed that Chandidasi had the ability to curse people since she breastfed dead children. They believed that Chandidasi was used by evil spirits. People believed that she practiced witchcraft and breastfed dead children. Chandidasi's sacrifice of her life itself is a slap on the rural superstitious people. Because of these people's superstitions she had to live alone and suffered as a **bayen** and had to keep herself away from the village, even from her son and husband, whom she loved a lot.

In this play Mahasweta Devi shows that the village people believe in superstitions and followed by her husband Malindar. While his wife was a lactating mother, milk flowed from

her breasts which is natural. But because of his superstitions he started questioning his wife: “Why your sari is dripping with milk? Whom were you suckling?” (Devi. 1997: 87).

This shows unethical and male dominated society’s glimpse. He started questioning her, instead of defending her from evil eyes of the villagers.

Later on, Malinder has a conversation with his son Bhagirath about her sari dripping with milk. Here Mahasweta Devi depicts the superstitious belief of the community people and Chandi’s husband as well.

Malindar said that’ “Now I’ve told you everything. Your mother’s been a **Bayen** ever since. They would have burnt her to death if she had been a witch. But, son, a **Bayen** is not for killing, kill a Bayen, and the children start dying. They set up a hovel for her beside the railway track, every Saturday they leave a hamper of food for her at her doorstep. Once a year they give her two saris and two gaamaccha” (Devi. 1997 :89)

Exploitation of a Woman and Chandidasi After Accused of Being a Bayen

Chandidasi could not keep her son with her and she affectionately and emotionally sang for her son, when she was forced to miss him and not keep her son by her side. This shows her motherly concern towards her son Bhagirath. This shows that how sick our society is, where a mother could not keep her son by her side:

Chandidasi sings for her son Bhagirath: “Come, sleep, come to my bed of rags, My child god sleeps in my lap ...” (Devi 2011: 97).

Chandidasi sings for her son every night. She has to keep herself away from her son because of the rural superstitious people. But they could not dissociate a mother’s emotional attachment and motherly love from her son.

Chandidasi confesses, that: “When I hadn’t become a **Bayen**, I had everybody” (Devi 2011: 97).

This shows that how she becomes lonely without her son and husband. She suffers from a terror of loneliness.

Chandidasi accepts, that: “I can’t bear it alone through the night” (Devi 2011: 100).

Conclusion

The domination of superstitions in society separates a mother from her son. A mother’s quality of motherly love, care, protectiveness as well as her motherhood are neglected by society and society accused her as a *bayen*.

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Knowledge and Attitudes of Speech Language Pathologists on Social Story Based Intervention: A Preliminary Study from South India

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Abstract

Social stories are recognized as an intervention strategy for individuals with communication disorders and typically developing children. The proficiency of a professional is determined by three key factors: knowledge, attitude, and practice towards current trends and available resources. The success of any intervention relies on the knowledge and attitude of the professional administering the protocol. Therefore, it is crucial to investigate the knowledge and attitude of speech-language pathologists (SLPs) in utilizing social stories. In India, there are over 3160 registered practicing speech-language pathologists; however, authorized statistics regarding the use of social stories by SLPs are not readily available. The present study aimed to understand the knowledge and attitude of SLPs towards social story-based intervention.

A total of 124 SLPs who are practicing in the field of speech language pathology served as the participants for the study. The study was conducted in three phases: phase I involved the development and validation of a questionnaire to explore the knowledge and attitude of speech language pathologists on social story-based intervention. The items were framed based on a Likert rating scale, yes-no-maybe format and open-ended format. Phase II involved data collection, while phase III involved data analysis. Descriptive statistics were done to derive the frequency and percentage for discrete variables across domains of knowledge and attitude. The present study is an initial attempt to touch upon the fabric of social stories-based intervention delivered by SLPs of India.

The findings of the study revealed that though the attitude of SLPs towards social stories is positive, and yet their knowledge has to be improved. Further, the current study highlights the need to improve the knowledge of SLPs and scope of future research on the practice of social story-based intervention by SLPs.

Keywords: Social story, South India, Autism spectrum disorder, Knowledge, Attitude

Introduction

Stories are fascinating to all generations of listeners, be it a child, grown up adolescent or even elderly population. It takes us to the world of wide imagination and fantasy with an ingrained excitement. With the advent of reformation in information and communication technology, the same leisure activity has risen to the platform of multimedia learning from the very old traditional way of listening to stories around grandmother chairs. Now, the researchers are keener to analyze the story listening activity to understand the benefits of it. This ranges from improving listening comprehension, word knowledge, imitations and inherent happiness of sharing the stories etc. It is a platform for promoting various learning approaches such as incidental learning, gestalt learning, and of course with the assistance of technology, multimedia learning also. Further, rehabilitative professionals, specifically Speech-Language pathologists, are using storytelling as a language building activity on their intervention of children with various communication disorders. From their perspective, shared book reading leans on the stories to improve the language abilities of children. Another practice of using stories to improve social skills of children is called social reading approaches, where the stories are labeled as social stories.

Social Stories are individualized short stories used to assist children and adolescents with autism spectrum disorders in understanding social situations by describing and explaining appropriate behavior and providing examples of appropriate responses. Social stories accurately describe a context, skill, achievement, or concept according to 10 defining criteria. These criteria guide Story research, development, and implementation to ensure an overall patient and supportive quality, and a format, “voice”, content, and learning experience that is descriptive, meaningful, and physically, socially, and emotionally, safe for the child, adolescent, or adult with autism. Social Stories were first developed, introduced, and trademarked in 1991 by Carol Gray (Gray 2010). Autism is a complex neurological disability that is diagnosed in increasingly large numbers of

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children. Social Stories were developed so that students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) could learn social skills. Social Stories are individualized short stories used to assist children and adolescents with autism spectrum disorders in understanding social situations by describing and explaining appropriate behavior and providing examples of appropriate responses. Children with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) are less able to learn social rules, conventions and behaviors by intuition compared with their typically developing peers. This may impact upon social interaction, social integration, learning and mental health and on occasions may lead to high levels of anxiety and or challenging behaviours (Wright et al., 2016). Social stories are short stories which explain cues and appropriate responses to significant situations in a social context and they may be prepared in written or visual form (Gray et al., 2002). They are generally regarded as a positive intervention strategy with some components of priming. It presents social behaviors in the form of concrete, visual cues that make the information more digestible for kids who aren't able to conceptualize an image when someone verbally explains what to do or what to express (Wright & McCathren, 2012).

The social stories used under Gray's approach contain the following types of sentences:

1. Descriptive: This part answers the wh- questions relevant to the situation. Where it is, who it's occurring with, and why it's happening. These sentences appear at the beginning of social stories. They describe situations and the people involved in them, what is going to happen, and the causes of events. They also address the following questions: Where? Who? What is going to happen?

2. Perspective: This part includes opinions, feelings, ideas related to the situation. These sentences describe internal feelings like - the sensations, wishes, emotions, attitudes, thoughts, and beliefs of people in the situations depicted. These sentences are very important because they contain information that is not available to children with ASD.

3. Directive: This part includes a range of responses for a particular situation. It's important that they have a positive focus and refrain from using "I have to" or "I must" in them. These sentences present social cues within situations and indicate the expected responses of individuals. Such responses may begin with "I will try" or "I will attempt".

4. **Affirmative:** This part includes statements that enhance the importance of the message to reassure the person. These sentences emphasize the importance of directive sentences; they begin with - "It is good that . . ."

5. **Co-operative:** This part includes statements to provide meaning to a situation. These sentences describe others' actions and show who these actions can help and how.

6. **Control sentences:** These sentences are added to the story by the storyteller and describe more general observations and thoughts to reinforce the information presented in the story (Gray, 2010).

The aforementioned way of intervention has been in practice in the field of rehabilitation science for 10 years but the proper utilization of available resources by our professionals in the field is a matter of question. There are three main factors which decide the skills of a professional: knowledge, attitude and practice towards current trends and available resources. Covid 19 pandemic situations forced children to spend their time in isolation, being away from social engagements which resulted in significant problems in developing appropriate social skills. The proper management of available resources like social stories can help to alleviate the deficits and can enhance the social skills within the home environment.

Ozdemir (2008) examined the effectiveness of multimedia social stories on the duration of appropriate social engagement in 3 young children with autism. The multimedia social stories were implemented, and observations were noted for the play sessions which were conducted three times per week. The participants showed an increase in the duration of appropriate social engagement during time of intervention where two participants showed generalization to a classroom setting. The study had shown that the implementation of multimedia social stories without focussing more on behavioral management techniques for increasing social engagement in children with autism is more effective.

Studies by Scattone, et al in 2006 and Thiemann and Goldstein in 2001 emphasized the point that many of the practitioners experience apprehensions regarding the impact of the sources of social stories on their effectiveness. The ready-made social stories which are widely available from public sources such as bookshops, internet are intended for general use only , and are created

to deal with typical social situations. They may not fulfill the precise needs of a particular individual who has autism. Thus, it is recommended that practitioners working with individuals with autism should try to devise their own social stories tailored to each individual's specific social needs.

Faihan Alotaibi (2017) conducted a study which explores the perceptions of fifteen teachers working in two different special schools in Riyadh who were dealing predominantly with children having autism. They used social stories among the children for developing social skills. The teachers were interviewed using semi-structured interviews. The findings thus indicate that the teachers were much aware regarding what is the concept of Social Stories and of where they could be obtained in Saudi Arabia. They also recognised the different barriers and factors which contribute to the effective use of social stories. According to them, culture was considered as a significant potential barrier to the use of social stories for the intervention.

Need of the Study

The global pandemic has instigated upheaval across various aspects of individuals' lives. Notably, its impact has been particularly pronounced among the younger generation due to constrained social opportunities. This surge has adversely affected all facets of a child's development. Many children lacked exposure to models of reciprocal social interaction in their learning environments, given the diverse work cultures of their parents. These factors heightened the risk of inadequate social skills in children. Additionally, children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), who already faced challenges with impaired social interaction skills, were especially impacted.

Social stories are designed for children with ASD to comprehend social situations. The use of social stories present a practical and promising solution for social skill targeted intervention programs. The efficacy of any intervention, including social stories, relies on the attitudes and knowledge of professionals toward its implementation. More than 3160 registered practicing speech language pathologists are available in India but authorized statistics regarding the Speech language pathologist using social stories is not available. To the best of the authors' knowledge,

there is a paucity of published literature on the effectiveness of social stories in intervention, and there are no published studies on the knowledge, attitude, and practice of speech language pathologists toward social stories in Indian contexts. Considering these factors, there is a clear need to investigate the knowledge and attitudes of speech-language pathologists regarding the utilization of social stories in their clinical practice. This study aims to contribute valuable insights into the current scenario, shedding light on the knowledge and attitudes of SLPs and their potential impact on intervention outcomes.

Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to explore the Knowledge and attitude of Speech language pathologists on the use of social story as an intervention strategy in clinical practice.

Objectives:

- To understand the Knowledge of SLP in using social stories as an intervention strategy
- To explore the Attitude of SLP in using social stories as an intervention strategy

Method

Participants

A total of 124 participants who are practicing in the field of speech language pathology were selected for the study.

Inclusion criteria: The participants of the study should be a

- (a) qualified Speech Language Pathologists who successfully completed their bachelor's program and possess more than one year of work experience after graduation & (b) SLPs who were actively engaged in working primarily with children with various communication disorders were considered for the study

Exclusion criteria: Speech language pathologists with less than 1 year of working experience were excluded from the study.

Procedure

The current study was carried out in three phases,

Phase 1 focused on the development and validation of the questionnaire addressing the knowledge & attitude of SLPs on the use of Social stories;

Phase 2 dealt with circulating this self- reported questionnaire & collecting the responses from participants

Phase 3 targeted on the analysis of responses from the participants

Phase 1: Development and Validation of Questionnaire

A questionnaire to evaluate the knowledge and attitude of Speech Language Pathologists regarding social stories was developed through a comprehensive review of literature, personal experiences, and clinical insights. The questionnaire's content areas were determined by analyzing scientific literature and engaging in potential discussions with experts. Two Subject Experts, both Speech Language Pathologists with over 6 years of clinical experience working with children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), provided valuable input. Additionally, the questionnaire underwent revision and modification through collaborative discussions between the investigators and subject experts.

The knowledge section consisted of 5 questions, while the attitude section consisted of 14 questions. To ensure content validity, the questionnaire was rated by 5 speech language pathologists with over 5 years of combined clinical and research experience. Each item on the questionnaire was rated on content, grammar, comprehensibility, and question relevance using a Likert scale, ranging from "very appropriate" to "very inappropriate." Feedback from the experts was incorporated, resulting in a final questionnaire consisting of 19 questions in English. The responses from participants were collected using a 5 point Likert rating scale as strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree yes-no-maybe format, open-ended questions, and multiple-choice questions. The target items in the domain of Knowledge were rated using Yes/No /Maybe format & Multiple-choice format. On the other hand for rating the target items in the domain of Attitude , a 5 point rating scale (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree),) was used in addition to the other response formats.

Phase 2: Administration of Questionnaire

The developed questionnaire was transformed into a google form. The responses were collected by circulating google form on WhatsApp mail and by administering the questionnaire through phone call. An initial phone contact was made to determine their willingness to participate in the study .On receiving their confirmation to participate, a consent form was collected from all the participants. The questionnaire was shared as two forms. The first form collects demographic details of participants along with the question "Are you familiar with the term social stories?" The participants who responded "yes" to that question were shared with the second form to analyze their "Knowledge and Attitude on social stories".

Phase 3: Analysis of the Responses

Descriptive statistics were done to derive the frequency and percentage for discrete variables. The initial part of the questionnaire included demographic data, followed by questions regarding knowledge and attitude towards the use of social story among SLPs. There were open ended questions to extract the in-depth information and perspectives .The responses were analyzed by calculating the frequency and percentage value for each question on the basis of the two domains.

Results

Participant Profile

Table 1 given below outlines the demographic characteristics of 124 participants. The majority of respondents, comprising 79.80%, were female, while 20.20% were male. Among the participants, 72% hold a bachelor's degree & 28% hold a master's degree in audiology & speech-language pathology. Approximately, 78% of total participants were practicing in Hospitals, Private clinics & Rehabilitation institutes. However, out of 124 participants, only 58 participants responded yes to the question "Are you familiar with the term social stories" while the term social story was new for 66 participants. Notably, a significant proportion of the participants primarily worked with individuals on the Autism spectrum disorder, followed by those with language disorders. The number of clients seen in a week range from a minimum of 3 to a maximum of 30 as reported by the participants.

Table 1

Demographic characteristics of participants

Questions	Data	Frequency	Percentage
No. of Participants	N	124	100%
Are you familiar with the term social stories?	Yes	58	46.80%
	No	66	53.20%
Gender	Male	25	20.20%
	Female	99	79.80%
Qualification	BASLP	89	71.80%
	MASLP	35	28.20%
	PHD	0	0%
	POST DOC	0	0%
Years of experience	0-2. years	77	61.30%
	3-6. years	39	31.30%
	6-10 years	6	4.80%
	above 10 years	2	1.60%
Work setting	Hospital	47	37.40%
	private clinics	37	30.10%
	rehabilitation institution	14	11.40%
	educational institution	18	14.60%
	Others	8	6.50%
Clients usually seen	ASD	77	
	Language disorder	60	

	Specific learning disability	59
	Cerebral palsy	38
	Global developmental delay	40
	Fluency disorder	39
	Adult neurological disorder	32
	Multiple disability	13
Number of clients seen in a week	Maximum	30
	Minimum	3

Knowledge Domain

The below given Table 2 describes participant's knowledge on social stories, assessed through five questions. A predominant 46.60% of participants acquired knowledge about social stories through their academic programs (BASLP/MASLP), followed by training, research articles, and their commencement of work as Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs). Participants commonly referred to sources such as twinkl.com, ABA educational resources, story weaver, LessonPix.com, Teachers Pay Teachers, among others, for social stories. Some participants also consulted related books and articles, YouTube videos, and customized social stories based on their clients' needs. Notably 9% of total participants were aware of the specific training on social stories but only 5 % had attended the special training program on social stories. Interestingly, 59% of participants believed that social skills were the primary focus of social story training, followed by behavioral skills. Unanimously, all participants agreed that motor skills were not emphasized in social story training.

Table 2

Performance of participants on the domain of Knowledge towards social stories

Questions	Number of counts. (%)		
1.How did you come to know about Social stories?	Research article	9	15.50%
	Academic program	27	46.60%
	Training	15	25.90%
	Other	7	12.10%
2.Have you attended any special training in social stories?	Yes	3	5.20%
	No	52	89.70%
	May be	3	5.20%
3.Name 2 sources commonly referred for social stories.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relayed on websites for Social stories like twinkl.com., ABA educational resources, storyweaver, LessonPix.com, Teachers Pay Teachers,pinterest, table2learn, kidmunicate, thomas's daily life(redmon kids) for younger kids Customized stories based on the client's needs using microsoft powerpoint and youtube videos Referred Books like Big book of social stories and some purchased social stories through online platforms. 		
4.Are you aware of any specific training with social stories?	Yes	5	8.60%
	No	52	89.70%
	Maybe	1	1.70%

5.Name the target skills for intervention using social stories.	Motor skills	0	0%
	Language skills	8	13.80%
	Behavioral skills	15	25.90%
	social skills	34	58.60%
	speech skills	1	1.70%

Attitude Domain

Table 3 details participant's attitudes towards social stories. There were 14 questions related to the attitude of speech language pathologists towards social stories. Approximately 88% of participants expressed a positive attitude towards the use of social stories in children with communication disorders as well as typically developing children. However, 2% of total participants did not agree that social stories are beneficial for children with anxiety. Around 93 % of participants opined that social stories as an intervention strategy improve the social skills of the children, Further, 73 % of participants agreed that social stories are beneficial for children with autism spectrum disorders followed by language disorders (14%). All the participants were ready to recommend social stories to parents & 91% believe social stories were cost effective. Though 97 % of participants recommend social stories to other professionals , only 57% prefer social stories over other strategies during intervention. Further 54% of participants also believe social stories were difficult to practice in daily clinical activities. Moreover, only 56% of participants agreed social stories can be used in varied contexts such as Home, School and clinics.

Table 3

Performance of participants on the domain of Attitude towards social stories

Questions		Frequency	Percentage
1. Social Story may benefit a child with communication disorder.	strongly agree	22	37.90%
	Agree	29	50.00%
	Neutral	7	12.10%
	Disagree	0	0 %
	Strongly Disagree	0	0%
2. Social stories can be used for typically developing child	strongly agree	24	41.40%
	agree	28	48.30%
	Neutral	6	10.30%
	Disagree	0	0 %
	strongly Disagree	0	0%
3. Social stories can be used for adults with communication disorders.	strongly agree	12	20.80%
	Agree	31	53.40%
	Neutral	13	22.40%
	Disagree	2	3.4%
	Strongly Disagree	0	0%
4. Social stories may help children with anxiety.	Strongly agree	9	15.30%
	Agree	25	44.00%
	Neutral	22	37.30%
	Disagree	2	3.40%
	Strongly Disagree	0	0%

5. Social stories are easily accessible to everyone as it is cheap and cost effective.	Strongly Agree	12	20.70%
	Agree	19	32.80%
	Neutral	22	37.90%
	Disagree	1	1.70%
	Strongly Disagree	4	6.90%
6. Social stories help in social skill development.	Strongly Agree	26	44.90%
	Agree	22	37.90%
	Neutral	6	10.30%
	Disagree	1	1.70%
	Strongly Disagree	3	5.20%
7. Do you prefer social stories over other strategies during intervention.	Yes	33	56.90%
	No	25	43.10%
8. Would you recommend the use of social stories for students without disabilities?	Yes	44	75.90%
	No	1	1.70%
	Maybe	13	22.40%
9. Which clinical populations benefit from social stories?	Child language disorder	8	13.80%
	Autism spectrum disorder	42	72.50%
	Adult Language disorder	2	3.40%
	Typically developing children	1	1.70%
	Children with Anxiety	5	8.60%
10. Do you think intervention using Social story is cost effective?	Yes	31	53.40%
	No	9	15.50%
	Maybe	18	31.10%
11. Do you recommend social stories to parents to improve social skills to the child	Yes	54	93.10%
	No	0	0%

	Maybe	4	6.90%
12. Do you recommend social stories to professionals to improve social skills to child	Yes	54	96.60%
	No	2	3.40%
13. Do you think social stories can be used in different contexts?	Home	15	26.30%
	School	8	14.00%
	Clinics	2	3.50%
	All of the above	33	56.20%
14. Do you think social stories are difficult to practice in daily clinical activities?	Yes	2	3.40%
	No	31	53.50%
	Maybe	20	34.50%
	Don't Know	5	8.60%

Discussion

The current study was an initial attempt to investigate knowledge and attitude of SLPs on social stories in India. The participants represented professionals from all types of work settings (private clinics, hospitals, educational institutes, and rehabilitation centers). When considering the gender distribution regarding the use of social stories, a total of 79.80% of the participants were females when compared to males (20.20%) indicating a profound inclination towards the female gender, which is well established in the field of speech and language sciences.

Knowledge of SLPs on social stories

Overall, the results suggested that there is a need for enhanced knowledge on social stories among Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs). Out of 124 participants 58 participants (46.77%) responded “yes” to the question “ Are you familiar with the term social stories”, where 66 participants (53.23%) were new to the term. However, the depth of understanding of participants on social story was not ascertained in the present study. Further, the results of the study indicate a pressing need for enhancing knowledge among SLP.

Among 58 participants, 8.60% was aware about special training related with social stories and in it only 5.20% has attended the available training programs, even though there are many workshops and webinars are available. Most of the relayed on websites, articles, books for the preparation of social stories. Majority of participants believed on improving social skills through social story based intervention. This is in agreement with the findings conducted by Bernard-Ripoll, (2007); Crozier and Tinconi, (2007) suggesting social story based interventions are effective to teach social skills for children with ASD.

Attitude of SLPs on Social Stories

In general, participants had a positive attitude towards social stories. The majority of participants strongly agreed to the statements that social stories may work for children with communication disorder, typically developing children and adults with communication disorder. Early research findings on social story based intervention indicated that social story has been found effective to help children with special needs to increase their social skill. However, there is still limited research in examining the effectiveness of social stories in promoting social skills of typically developing children. Approximately half of the participants had a positive attitude on the effectiveness of social story based intervention on children with anxiety. This is in support to the findings of the study carried out by Kokina and Kern (2010) where authors identified four promising areas of behavioural changes as a result of social based intervention, consisting of reducing negative behavior, increasing positive behavior, managing transitions/novel situations/anxiety, and teaching new skills (academic/functional).

Around 44.90% of participants of the present study was with the opinion that social stories are helpful in social skill development. This is in concordance with the findings of studies conducted by Amin et al (2013); Leaf et al (2012), Quirmbach, et al (2009), Karkhaneh, et al (2010) and Mason (2017). The study identified children with autism spectrum disorder as the clinical population that derives the greatest benefit from social stories, followed by those with language disorders. This observation is consistent with the results reported by Kokina and Kern (2010) and Pane et al. (2015). In the current study, nearly 53.40% agreed that intervention using social stories is cost effective, but only 20% stated that it is easily accessible. Previous studies

conducted by Derguy et al. (2015) and Wahman et al (2022) also opined that social stories based intervention were of low cost, accessible, and address parents' support needs, such as managing challenging behavior.

Limitations of the Study

- Most of the participants had the experience of 2 years.
- The questionnaire was lengthy, which resulted in more time consumption.
- The majority of the participants' qualification was limited to bachelor's degree.

Future directions

Based on the findings of the current study, while speech-language pathologists (SLPs) generally hold a positive attitude towards social stories, only half of the participants express a preference for this intervention strategy over other approaches. Additionally, an equal proportion of participants reported facing challenges in integrating social stories into their daily clinical practice. Consequently, there is a need for future research to delve into the clinical implementation of social story-based interventions. Additional research is necessary to investigate the potential advantages of interventions based on social stories. This can be achieved through large-scale studies. Expanding the scope of the study by specifically targeting individuals with more extensive clinical experience and higher qualifications would enhance its comprehensiveness. Future research efforts should be aimed at examining the operational and implementation challenges associated with social story-based intervention services, particularly in the context of communication disabilities.

Implications

The current study highlights the importance of raising awareness among both aspiring and practicing speech-language pathologists (SLPs) regarding social stories. It advocates for the incorporation of social story-based intervention approaches and practices into the academic curriculum. The study's results indicate a relatively poorer knowledge about social story-based intervention when considering participants' attitudes. To substantiate these findings, future

research should focus on investigating the clinical implementation of social story-based interventions.

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Materials Adaptation in ELT: Challenges in India Context

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Abstract

Materials adaptation is relatively a recent field of study in ELT, commencing in the late 1980's. Materials adaptation in ELT refers to the modification of materials by bringing the materials closer to a particular context of language teaching. The purpose of materials adaptation is to make language teaching more effective. This paper discusses the process of materials adaptation in ELT focusing on the various techniques. Through a comprehensive literature review and description of existing practices the paper elucidates various techniques employed in materials adaptation. Moreover, the paper investigates diverse issues that hinder the adaptation of ELT materials in Indian context. The aim of this paper is to shed light on the materials adaptation as a significant process in ELT. Moreover, the paper also aims to highlight various issues in Indian context that need to be addressed to include materials development as a crucial element in English language teaching classrooms in India.

Keywords: India, ELT, ELT materials, materials adaptation, materials development.

Introduction

Materials in ELT refer to anything that can be used in English language teaching. According to McGrath (2013) materials in ELT include realia and representations. Realia are real

objects such as a chair or a piece of fruit and representation includes a drawing or a photograph of someone or something. Such materials can be called as non-verbal because they do not consist of any language content. McGrath (2013) argues that the advantage of verbal materials which include written and spoken materials over those of non-verbal materials is that they consist of both language and content. The form of language in verbal materials serves as the examples of language use and the content refers to the ideas carried by the language to which the learners react. Tomlinson (2001) defines materials as “anything which can be used to facilitate the learning of a language”. They include visual, auditory and print materials. Despite technological advances in electronics, textbooks are still the most used language learning and teaching materials (Tomlinson, 2001). Textbook materials act as the primary source for presenting the content of the language that has to be taught and learnt. Textbook materials determine the aims and objectives of an ELT programme.

Richards (2014) states, that the textbook materials provide the main basis for the curriculum. They also provide an outline for carrying out the teaching/learning activities. Moreover, textbook materials provide evaluation strategies for measuring the process of teaching/learning process. Many researchers (Grant, 1987; O’Neill 1982; Hutchinson and Torres, 1994; Ur 1996; Cunningsworth; Richards, 2001; and Tomlinson) have argued in favor of using the textbook materials in ELT.

The various reasons to use textbook materials in ELT can be summarized as follows.

1. Textbook materials are cost effective in terms of time and money.
2. Textbooks provide a basis for language teaching and learning curriculum which provides the teachers with guidelines to carry out the teaching process.
3. Textbooks provide learners with samples of language upon which they can maximize their learning.
4. Textbook materials help teachers and students keep track of what has been learnt and help learners revise what has been taught.

Textbook materials play a significant role in English language teaching and learning in Indian context. They do not only provide language teaching-learning content but also provide a framework for carrying out the teaching process. The textbooks are significant in ELT classrooms

in India because they provide a syllabus, the language content, methodology, and ways to assess what learners have learnt. Moreover, the dependence on these textbooks can also be largely associated with the fact that the learners are evaluated on the basis of these textbooks in the end term examinations.

English is taught as a compulsory subject in many states at the school and college level. The textbooks for English in India are produced by the ministry of education, for example, the English textbooks for government schools of Kashmir are developed by NCERT India. A textbook development committee is formed which includes members from English departments of universities, colleges and schools such as professors, and lecturers.

At the state level the textbooks for English are developed by the state boards or universities. For example, the English language textbooks for the undergraduate students are developed by the University of Kashmir. Given the multilingual and multicultural diversity of India, these textbooks most often pose a lot of problems in English language teaching.

The textbook development committee is in no way a representative of the diverse multilingual and multicultural India. The textbooks developed do not reflect the practical aspects of an actual Indian classroom, the needs of the learners, and the needs of the teachers. This gives rise to problems at the various levels such as inappropriate content, rigid methodology, uninteresting activities, and insufficient activities.

The teachers in India are mostly non-native speakers of English language and heavily depend on the textbooks to carry out their teaching process. In such contexts where the teachers are dependent on these textbooks English language teaching becomes inefficient. One of the solutions to address such problems is to replace the textbooks with new ones. But, replacing the textbooks with new ones is a policy decision and takes a lot of time and resources.

Since textbooks cannot be replaced after every academic session, it is more efficient to make changes in the already existing textbooks. These changes can be made in order to meet the

specific teaching-learning needs of a particular context. This process of making changes in the textbooks to make language teaching effective is called adaptation.

Materials Adaptation

Materials adaptation is a process of changing the existing materials to better suit specific learners, teachers and contexts to facilitate effective learning (Tomlinson and Masuhara, 2018). This definition provides three significant elements, namely, learners, teachers and contexts, with respect to which the changes in a textbook can be made. Mc Donough et al. (2013) view adaptation as a matching process between the external criteria and the internal criteria. The external criteria may include learner characteristics, physical environment, resources and class size and the internal criteria includes the content of the materials. It is a process where a teacher decides to change content such as activities, exercises, texts, and tests to produce a revised version for the learners. Mc Donough et al (2013) state that adaptation is a response to specific learner's behavior at a particular moment in the teaching learning process. Materials adaptation does not indicate that the materials are defective, rather, materials can be well developed and well organized but they may not meet the specific needs of a particular language learning and teaching context. In such cases, adaptation becomes a 'necessary activity' (Mc Donough et al 2013) to bridge the gap in ways that will be satisfying for those who learn from it' (Stevick, 1972).

Reason for Adapting ELT Materials

Language teaching classrooms always pose many challenges for language teachers. The cases where materials do not meet the specific requirements of a teaching learning context can be addressed by adapting the materials. The main reason for adapting materials is to make English language teaching effective. Islam and Maves (2003) state that adapting materials can help in catering for all learner styles, provide for learner autonomy and make language input more engaging. Tomlinson and Masuhara (2018) point out that adapting materials can not only contribute to the learners' learning but also to the teachers' enjoyment of teaching.

McDonough et al (2013) provide a list of reasons to adapt materials which include insufficient grammar coverage, unknown vocabulary in reading passages, inauthentic listening

passages, easy comprehension questions, too much or too little variety of activities and inappropriate subject matter for the learners. But, every teaching learning situation differs, therefore, the reasons for adapting materials may vary depending on a particular teaching learning situation.

Techniques of Adaptation

The four techniques for adapting materials mentioned by McDonough et al (2013) are discussed as follows:

1. Adding: The addition implies that the materials which are not sufficient for the learners are supplemented by adding more to them. However, it is also important that the addition of more content into the materials should not have any effect on time allocation. The addition can be done quantitatively the technique of extending. In this technique the addition is done by extending the same exercise or activity. This can be done in situations such as enough practice examples of some aspect of language are needed, extra reading passages for reinforcing key linguistic elements are needed, or extra exercises for the explanation of new grammar points is needed.

Addition can also be done through the technique of expanding. Such additions put new components or new language skills in the already existing materials. these additions are different from extending because they are not only the extension of an existing materials but move into new directions by adding to the methodology. For example, adding practice exercises on sentence stress and rhythm in already existing pronunciation practice which only contains practice on individual sounds, or adding a listening comprehension materials to a reading passage because of insufficient coverage of listening skill.

2. Deleting

Deletion refers to taking out or omitting material on a small scale such as part of an exercise or on a large scale such as a unit in a textbook. The deletion in materials can be applied in situations such as pronunciation exercises may be too general and the learners may not require them and such exercises can be deleted, language functions presented in a textbook may not be required by the

learners, or discussion section at the end of units for learners who cannot tackle those discussions adequately.

3. Modifying

Modification refers ‘to an internal change in the approach or focus of an exercise or other piece of material’ (Mc Donough et al 2013). Modification can be done in two ways: rewriting and restructuring. Rewriting is used when some linguistic content needs modification. and restructuring is used when classroom management needs modification.

Rewriting can be done to change the focus of materials such as making activities more communicative where textbooks lag behind in meeting students’ needs. Rewriting is done to relate activities more closely to learners’ backgrounds and interests, introduce samples of authentic language, or make tasks more purposeful (Mc Donough et al 2013). Rewriting can be done to make the content local so that the students can understand it easily. A text may have appropriate language material for a specific group, but may not match in terms of its cultural content. Several studies have indicated positive results when we incorporate local learners’ culture into ELT materials by making the linguistic input more appropriate, and by exploiting what learners know best by rewriting a reading text which was previously filled with foreign elements. Islam and Mares (2003) also provided extensive examples for making textbooks more learning centred through rewriting.

Restructuring refers to the modification which may change the structuring of the class while following a textbook. These changes are done where rewriting is not possible and the teachers are required to follow a textbook. For example, role-play activities may not match the size of classrooms, sometimes the classroom size may be too large or too small for carrying out such activities. Similarly, a written activity designed to carry out individually can be made more easy for the learners if it is turned into a group activity. In such cases the modification means to change the focus of an exercise, text or an activity.

4. Simplifying

As the term suggests, simplifying is a technique of adaptation in which the elements of materials are simplified. These elements may include instructions and explanations of activities

and exercises to make them easier for learners. Mc Donough et al (2013) states that sometimes oversimplifying may be misleadingly partial. For example, telling learners that adverbs in English are always formed by adding 'ly' to adjectives. The technique of simplification is mostly applied to the reading passages with emphasis on changing various elements to match the text more closely to the proficiency level of the learners. Simplification can be done to reduce sentence length or complexity, control new vocabulary with reference to what learners have already learned, changing grammatical structures.

5. Reordering

Reordering refers to the process of changing the parts of a textbook by putting them in a different order. This can be done within a unit by adjusting the sequence of presentation of activities or putting the units in a different order within a textbook.

Issues in ELT Materials Adaptation in India

This section discusses various issues that hinder materials adaptation in India. The present study identifies five major issues that could hinder the process of materials adaptation in ELT in Indian contexts.

i. Examination Driven Teaching

In India, examinations take precedence above all else (Meganathan, 2009). Teachers predominantly rely on textbooks without considering the actual needs of their students. These examinations assess reading and writing skills, with questions often relying on memorization. Consequently, teachers prioritize syllabus completion over fostering the learners' language skills. Inflexible exam requirements mean teachers cannot alter activities, exercises, or texts, as exam questions are typically based on these materials. Teachers with innovative ideas for textbook modifications often find themselves unable to implement these changes in the classroom, as they must adhere strictly to examination guidelines. Teachers often feel pressured to adhere strictly to the prescribed syllabus and teaching materials to ensure students perform well on exams, leaving little room for adaptation of the textbook materials.

ii. Unified Textbook

The use of a single, standardized textbook across diverse educational contexts in India can pose challenges in catering to the varying needs, interests, and proficiency levels of students. These textbooks are designed for a broader audience in which the linguistic and cultural background of the students is often overlooked. Such textbooks often lack flexibility and hinder teachers in adapting the materials to meet the needs of the learners. A unified textbook may not adequately reflect the linguistic and cultural diversity of India, often overlooking regional variations in language usage and experiences. The content and activities in a unified textbook may not resonate with students from different socio-cultural backgrounds, potentially leading to disengagement and limited learning outcomes. The unified textbooks are often subject to strict standardization requirements, leaving little room for adaptation by teachers. This can hinder teachers' ability to address individual learning styles, preferences, and abilities within their classrooms. Moreover, these textbooks often adhere to a particular methodology that might not be suitable for all learners. Teachers, in such cases, may find it challenging to adapt the material to align with alternative teaching methodologies or approaches that better suit their students' needs.

iii. Lack of Training

The teachers who are involved in the textbook development at the state or national levels often belong to the higher levels of education and have years of experience in teaching English language. But, these teachers are not the representative of all the teachers who are involved in teaching English in Indian classrooms. The teachers in India do not have any training in textbook development. They are unaware about the principles and procedures of both textbook development and textbook evaluation. This poses a serious problem when it comes to adapting textbooks in a particular context. Firstly, such teachers often fail to identify the learner needs. Secondly, in cases where such teachers might sometimes succeed in identifying learner needs their limited professional development hinders their ability to adapt and innovate in response to evolving educational needs. Adaptation involves modifying textbook content, activities, and assessments to accommodate students with varying abilities and learning preferences. Untrained teachers lack the expertise to effectively differentiate instruction, resulting in limited adaptation and engagement among students.

iv. Time Constraints

Time constraints within the educational system, including crowded curricula and limited instructional hours, may restrict teachers' ability to deviate from prescribed teaching materials and explore alternative solutions to various problems associated with the teaching. Teachers often struggle to cover the required content within the allocated time, leaving little flexibility for supplemental activities, or individualized support for students. Moreover, teachers in Indian classrooms are often burdened with many administrative duties which further reduces the time available for their experiments with the textbooks.

v. Classroom Size

Large classroom sizes are a major problem in Indian context. Teachers often teach in classes with more than 30 students. This is a significant problem in textbook adaptation because the teachers may struggle to provide individualized attention to each student. Adaptation often involves tailoring instruction to meet the diverse needs and learning styles of students. However, in a large class setting, teachers may find it challenging to address the specific needs of every learner, leading to less effective adaptation of materials. Effective adaptation also requires differentiating instruction to accommodate students with varying proficiency levels, learning styles, and abilities. In a large classroom, implementing differentiation strategies can be challenging due to the sheer number of students. Teachers may find it difficult to modify materials and activities to suit the diverse needs of all learners, resulting in limited adaptation.

Large class sizes can inhibit student interaction and participation. Adaptation often involves incorporating interactive and collaborative activities to engage students actively in the learning process. However, in a large classroom, opportunities for meaningful interaction and participation may be limited, making it challenging to effectively adapt materials that rely on student engagement.

Managing a large classroom can be demanding, requiring effective classroom management strategies to maintain order and discipline. Adaptation efforts may be hindered by the need to focus on managing behavior and maintaining a conducive learning environment, leaving less time and energy for modifying materials and activities.

Conclusion

The study discussed the process of materials adaptation in ELT, shedding light on the diverse techniques used in this process. Adaptation is of paramount importance in ELT ensuring effective language teaching outcomes by localizing ELT materials. It is a growing field of study within the realm of ELT and various research studies have been carried out throughout the world to understand the intricacies of the process. However, in Indian context not much has been discussed on the field of materials adaptation. India is a multilingual and multicultural nation and addressing these issues at the classroom level in ELT textbooks can prove beneficial for meeting the needs of both the learners and the teachers.

This study discussed various issues in materials adaptation in the Indian context such as examination driven language teaching, unified textbook, lack of training, time constraint and classroom size. These issues reflect the ground reality of Indian ELT classrooms which need to be addressed to foster a conducive environment for effective materials adaptation. This will result in catering to the dynamic needs of the learners and teachers and enhance the quality of ELT materials in India.

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Materials Adaptation in ELT: Challenges in India Context

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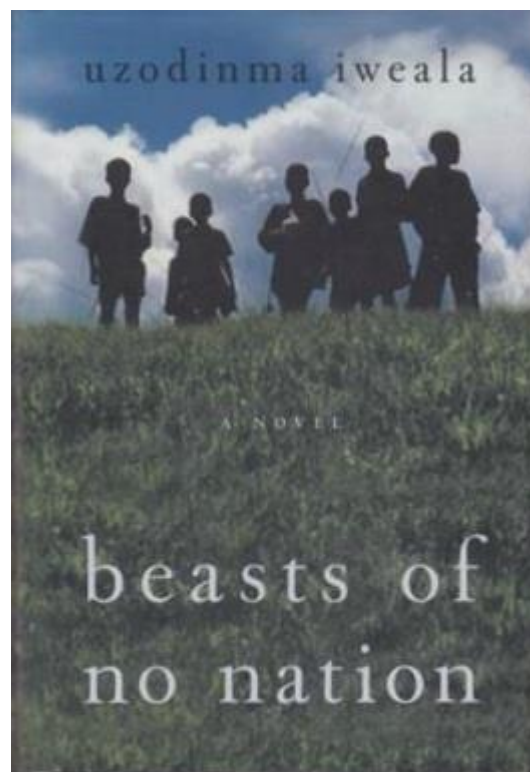
Chris Abani's *Graceland* and Uzodinma Iweala's *Beasts of No Nation*: Representation of Individual and the Nation

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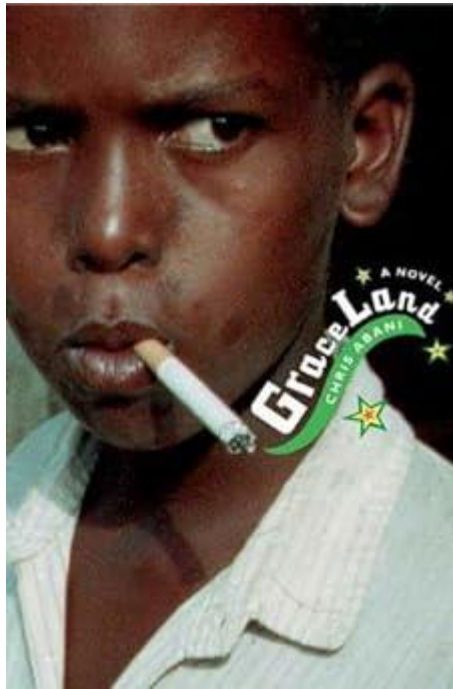


Courtesy: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/d/da/Beasts_of_No_Nation.jpg

Abstract

Chris Abani and Uzodinma Iweala are notable writers in contemporary Nigerian literature. The research paper examines the themes from "Graceland" by Chris Abani and

Beasts of No Nation by Uzodinmo Iweala. This critical study uses the comparative analysis method to reveal common themes, such as the effects of social and political change on individuals that ultimately result in the loss of innocence and the transition to adulthood. Exploring themes of instability, social and political, immorality, relationships, and coming of age, along with identity and belonging, highlights how characters channel a complex sense of self in stimulating settings.



Courtesy: www.amazon.com

Chris Abani

Chris Abani, a world-renowned author, and scholar was born in Afikpo, Nigeria. He received his bachelor's degree in English from IMO State University and his master's degree from the University of London. Abani went on to pursue his doctorate in literature and creative writing from the University of Southern California, where he made significant contributions to modern Nigerian literature. Throughout his career, Abani has been honoured with numerous awards, including the California Book Award for his work "The Secret History of Las Vegas" and the Penn Hemingway Book Award for "Graceland". Abani's writing often explores themes of social discrimination, individual freedom, narrative complexity, and instability without compromise.

Graceland

Graceland provides insight into the challenges faced by people in troubled countries, like Elvis, who struggle and succeed in improving their lives. The study "Surplus City: Structural Adjustment, Self-Fashioning, and Urban Insurrection in Chris Abani's *Graceland*" by Ashley Dawson highlights "*Graceland*" as a postcolonial exploration of urban society, reflecting tensions between elite and popular perspectives on development within a fictional mega-city.

The article 'Peripheral Violence in *Graceland*' by Annalisa Oboe and Elisa Bordin explores socioeconomic and cultural violence in Chris Abani's novel. The main character, Elvis Oke, shows resilience in confronting challenges in the Maroko slum despite pervasive violence. Elvis aims to assert aesthetic and intellectual agency, resisting confined conditions in a world shaped by neocolonialism and neo-capitalism.

Uzodinma Iweala

Uzodinma Iweala is an award-winning Nigerian American author, physician, and filmmaker. He was born on November 5, 1982, and has made significant contributions in various fields, from literature to medicine. A highlight of his work is his debut novel, *Beasts of No Nation*, which reflects his commitment to addressing critical social issues, raising awareness, and promoting understanding. His diverse background and impressive accomplishments have led him to play an essential role in literature and global health.

Beasts Of No Nation

Beasts of No Nation is about how war harms young people, dehumanizes them, and robs them of their innocence. This thought-provoking book shows the harsh effects of war on children.

The study "Wars as Postcolonial African Illness in Uzodinma Iweala's *Beasts of No Nation*" by Oman Osiki, Sola Owonibi and Oluyinka Ojedokun examines the ongoing problem of wars in Africa, especially in the postcolonial era. It highlights the psychological impact on children and the geopolitical challenge posed by war in Africa's path to nationhood.

The study 'Chris Abani's *Graceland* and Uzodinma Iweala's *Beasts of No Nation*: Nonstandard English, Intertextuality and Ken Saro-Wiwa's *Sozaboy*' by Iain Lambert compares "Graceland" and "Beasts of No Nation" in terms of their use of nonstandard English and intertextuality. The novels offer unique perspectives on Nigerian English in diasporic literature.

Insights Into Chris Abani's *Graceland*

Graceland is a fascinating literary work of Nigeria's culture. In a country where political chaos and cultural diversity exist, the story follows the life of a young boy called Elvis who's pretending to be Presley in Lagos. Abani skillfully interconnects themes of identity, familial connections, and the struggle for existence in a nation grappling with corruption and societal challenges. A captivating insight into the indomitable spirit of people is provided in this book by examination of their ambitions under a turbulent environment.

Political Instability: The contemporary work depicts a diverse range of themes that shed light on the complex tapestry of both Nigerian society and the broader human experience. A primary theme within the narrative is the depiction of Nigeria's political instability and widespread corruption during the 1980s. The story unfolds amidst political coups, military rule, and oppressive governance, with characters navigating the profound repercussions of political decisions on everyday citizens. The quote 'It was the best of times; it was the worst of times.' [...] That was the perfect description of life in Lagos, he thought. Gives the illustration of Political Instability.

Self-discovery: Another prominent theme explored is the quest for identity and self-discovery. The central character, Elvis Oke, begins a poignant journey to reconcile his Nigerian heritage with his upbringing in America. This struggle for a sense of belonging is not confined to Elvis alone; various characters grapple with questions of nationality, ethnicity, and their place in a society undergoing transformative change. The theme of Self-discovery is evident from the quote: "What I've come to learn is that the world is never saved in grand messianic gestures but in the simple accumulation of gentle, soft, almost invisible acts of compassion."

Relationships: Abani artfully weaves the theme of family and relationships throughout the narrative. Elvis's interactions with his father, stepmother, and peers reveal complex familial dynamics, echoing the broader tensions present in Nigerian society. The novel effectively examines conventional and unconventional familial bonds, illustrating how these relationships influence personal experiences. The depiction of the Relationship between Elvis and his Father can be seen in the following quote: “He knew that scar, that pain, that shame, that degradation that no metaphor could contain, inscribing it on his body. And yet beyond that, he was that scar carved by hate, smallness, and fear onto the world's face. He and everyone like him, until the earth was aflame with scarred black men dying in trees of fire.”

Socioeconomic Disparities: Socioeconomic disparities are vividly portrayed, underscoring the stark divide between Nigeria's affluent elite and its struggling masses. The narrative highlights the striking contrast between Elvis's privileged life in America and the profound hardship he encounters upon returning to Nigeria. This theme is a lens through which readers comprehend the societal imbalances influencing characters' choices and trajectories. The following piece of conversation between Elvis and Redemption gives the clue about socio-economic disparity: - “Elvis, take de passport. You know I myself no go ever go America,' Redemption said.

'Why?'

'Because dis na my home. I be area boy, alaye. I no go fit for States.”

Post-colonialism: Abani also delves into the aftermath of colonialism and its implications for cultural identity. Traditional belief systems intersect with Western influences, leading to tensions and a search for authenticity. This exploration of cultural heritage underscores how historical legacies and traditions continue to shape contemporary viewpoints.

The Crucible of Transformation: The novel follows Elvis's transformative journey from adolescence to adulthood, capturing the countless challenges and uncertainties that accompany this transitional phase. His experiences become a conduit through which the broader theme of coming of age is explored, as he navigates personal losses and confronts the harsh realities of the world around him.

Violence: A notable theme intertwined within the narrative is violence and trauma, portraying the enduring impact of conflict on both individuals and society. Characters are exposed to various forms of violence, prompting an examination of their coping mechanisms and how these traumatic encounters mould their identities. This portrayal of violence underscores its cyclical nature and its capacity to reverberate through generations. Violence can be seen through the conversation between Colonel and Elvis in the following excerpt: “Dis your friend is a lucky man. The Colonel has killed people for this kind of disrespect,” Jimoh said. “But I did nothing,” Elvis protested. Redemption and the soldiers laughed. “Dis your friend is a hothead. He did not learn his lesson, I see,” Jimoh said. “What lesson?” Elvis asked. “Dat dere is no right or wrong with soldier. Just what we want,” Jimoh replied

Analysis of Uzodinma Iweala’s *Beasts of No Nation*

Beasts of No Nation is a work about children forced to be soldiers in a country where war occurs frequently. The story is set in a war-prone region in Africa. Agu, the protagonist and the central character of the literary work is terrified when his hometown is attacked. Other men lead Agu to lose his innocence and get him involved in misconduct.

The work engages with various themes that illustrate the utter truths of conflict and the unyielding human capacity for survival. The novel centres on the distressing theme of child soldiering and exploitation, chronicling Agu's involuntary enlistment into a rebel army during an unidentified West African civil war. Through Agu's narrative, the work exposes the grim reality of children being bullied, brainwashed, and manipulated into becoming agents of violence in conflicts that lie beyond their conception.

Loss of Innocence: The work deals with the profound loss of innocence. This theme resonates throughout as Agu and his fellow child soldiers are thrust into a world of brutality and savagery far removed from their earlier innocence. Their harrowing experiences shatter their innocence and irreparably reshape their understanding of the world. This distressing loss of innocence serves as a recurring motif, symbolic of the disastrous toll of war on childhood. The following excerpt illustrates the loss of innocence: “Because I am tall more than him, I know that I am older, but nobody is really telling how old they are anymore. All we are knowing is that, before the war we are children and now we are not.”

Violence: At its core, the work deals with the theme of violence and its outcome. The pages of the novel bear vivid depictions of the cruelty Agu witnesses and participates in, starkly underscoring the traumatic scars etched on his psyche. This theme delves deep into the lasting psychological wounds that conflict inflicts, echoing far beyond the immediate theatre of war. The novel, in many ways, serves as a testament to the permanent imprint of violence on individuals and societies.

Dominion Through Manipulation: Power dynamics and control play a crucial role in the narrative's exploration. Commanders within the rebel faction assert dominion through manipulation and intimidation, fostering an environment of steady compliance among the child soldiers. This theme affectingly illustrates the manipulation of power to exploit the vulnerable, propagating cycles of oppression and violence.

Resilience: Amid the bleakness, the theme of resilience and survival emerges as a directing thread. Agu and his compatriots adapt to their nightmarish existence, showcasing the innate human ability to endure and prevail in the terrible circumstances. This resilience serves as a testament to the human's ability to continue even in the face of challenging odds. The theme of Resilience can be understood through the quote: "I am waiting outside in the darkness making myself ready for when I go in. So, I am thinking as many good things I can think because if you are thinking good thing, nothing bad is happening to you."

Loss and Grief: Loss and grief also occupy a central thematic space. Agu grapples with the death of loved ones and the extinction of his community, serving as an example of the broader losses experienced by war-ravaged nations. These personal losses echo the collective mourning that conflict imposes on societies, underscoring the far-reaching effects of war. The lines below give an idea about the theme of loss and grief: "I was feeling like somebody is coming to take everything that I like and just make me to sad."

Identity and Belonging: The theme of identity and belonging takes on an insightful significance as Agu navigates life as a child soldier. Struggling with loyalties, blurred moral boundaries, and a broken sense of self, Agu's trajectory embodies the identity crises that

conflict thrusts upon individuals. His interactions with fellow child soldiers and the factional divisions within the rebel group further highlight this theme.

The following excerpt illustrates the theme of identity and belonging: “so we were playing all this game then and thinking that to be a soldier was to be the best thing in the world because gun is looking so powerful and the men in movie are looking so powerful and strong when they are killing people, but I am knowing now that to be a soldier is only to be weak and not strong, and to have no food to eat and not to eat whatever you want, and also to have people making you do thing that you are not wanting to do and not to be doing whatever you are wanting which is what they are doing in movie. But I am only knowing this now because I am soldier now.”

The Dehumanizing Impact of War: Dehumanization and desensitization are also intertwined into Agu's transformation. His gradual acceptance of violence as a survival mechanism and his detachment from his own emotions mirror the dehumanizing impact of war, illuminating how individuals can become desensitized to suffering in order to sustain. The theme of Dehumanizing Impact of war can be evident through the following quote: “I am fearing because I am seeing that the only way not to be fighting is to die. I am not wanting to die.”

To Conclude

Graceland and *Beasts of No Nation* highlight how literature can reveal both common and unique aspects of the human experience amid challenges. They share similar themes that shed light on the deep effects of political turmoil and conflict on people. Researchers including Ashley Dawson, Annalisa Oboe and Elisa Bordin, Oman Osiki, Sola Owonibi and Oluyinka Ojedokun in their study confirm the themes including the dehumanizing effects of war, power dynamics, ethical dilemmas in rebel groups, and broader societal consequences. Both works explore transformative journeys during tumultuous teenage years in societies ravaged by unrest. These two literary works provide poignant insights into the lasting impacts of political upheaval on individuals and society.

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Reviving Storytelling for Environmental Literacy: A Focus on Children Aged 4-12

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Abstract

This research paper explores the potential of storytelling as a means to revive environmental literacy and empathy, particularly targeting children aged 4-12. The paper draws on ecocentric theories and existing research to argue that children's literature, with its simple language, subtle plots, and sentient settings, can serve as a powerful tool for developing environmental intimacy and subsequently literacy. The study emphasizes the need to create and nurture an instinctual kinship with nature in children, with the ultimate goal of fostering a sense of responsibility and citizenship for environmental protection. The pilot study, conducted in schools in Kerala with a student beneficiary count of 500, provides preliminary insights into the effectiveness of incorporating storytelling into environmental education.

Keywords: Environmental literacy, Empathy, Storytelling, Children's literature, Ecocentrism, Pilot study, Sustainable solutions.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The growing environmental concerns highlight the need for effective strategies to cultivate environmental literacy and empathy, particularly among younger children. This paper focuses on utilizing storytelling, specifically through children's literature that decentralises the human element, as a means to address this challenge.

1.2 Objectives

The primary objectives of this research are to underscore the importance of storytelling in nurturing environmental literacy, especially in children aged 4-12, and to explore the potential impact of such initiatives on environmentally empathetic behaviour and decision-making.

Narratives involving plants, animals, and insects are posited as powerful tools to foster compassion toward all living beings, transcending the anthropocentric narratives. This becomes especially relevant in urban settings where a direct connection to nature may be lacking, and stories serve as a conduit for building that vital link. By weaving tales that intricately involve the natural world, this research seeks to illuminate how narratives can ignite a sense of connection and compassion toward plants, animals, land, rivers and mountains and other living beings ignored or feared.

In today's world where direct experiences with nature may be limited, these stories aim to serve as windows into the intricate ecosystems and life forms that coexist beyond concrete landscapes and subsequently children can develop a heightened appreciation for the environment, leading to a more profound understanding of the interconnectedness between humans and the natural world. The ultimate end is cultivating a sense of responsibility and empathy, influencing future decisions and behaviours that contribute positively to environmental preservation. In a time when we should be asking ourselves about the right relationship we should have with nature, the work is of utmost relevance.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Ecocentrism

The theoretical framework of this research is grounded in ecocentrism, a philosophy that challenges the traditional human-centered view of the environment and emphasizes the intrinsic value of all living beings and ecosystems. Ecocentrism has its roots in environmental philosophy, questioning the dichotomy between humans and the environment, and advocating for the flourishing of non-human species independently of human interests. Ecocentrism has played a significant role in shaping environmental education, particularly in response to concerns raised in publications like "The Limits to Growth."

The Belgrade Charter, emerging from UNESCO, set the goal of environmental education to develop a population aware of environmental issues and committed to working towards solutions. Inspired by ecocentrism, ecopedagogy promotes an "earth democracy" and the rights of all living organisms.

The theoretical foundation of the paper extends to the role of 'wonder' in establishing a connection to nature within an ecocentric framework. Various disciplines such as science, geography, drama, English, and art are suggested to be integrated into the curriculum to deepen this connection.

2.2 Ecopedagogy and Storytelling

Ecopedagogy, as mentioned in the theoretical framework, supports an 'earth democracy' and emphasizes the rights of all living organisms. In storytelling, incorporating narratives that promote a sense of interconnectedness with nature will foster empathy for all living beings. Stories that emphasize the intrinsic value of all elements in ecosystems can inform the beauty and importance of nature, encouraging children to develop a profound connection with the environment. Extending intrinsic value to all living things, stories can be designed to portray the significance of each living being in the ecosystem, promoting a non-anthropocentric perspective.

Storytelling by presenting narratives that showcase the intricate relationships within ecosystems helps children understand the importance of balance and harmony in nature. Subsequently, children's stories can instill environmental stewardship, encouraging a sense of responsibility and care for the natural world. As the Systems theory says, emphasizing ecosystems as interconnected systems, by portraying characters and events as integral parts of a larger ecological system. This approach helps children grasp the idea that all elements in nature are interdependent.

Some of the recent studies examine the bond between individuals and the natural environment: children (Cross, 2011; Ward, 2014) and adults aged 18-68 (Mayer & Frantz, 2004). The studies indicate that engaging with wild nature during childhood contributes to a heightened connection with nature in adulthood (Liefländer, Fröhlich, Bogner, & Schultz, 2013). Additionally, other scholarly works have employed an animal liberation perspective to explore the concept of biological egalitarianism in environmental education (Caine, 2008). It is asserted that children must encounter nature to enhance their "physical, mental, and spiritual health" (Louv, 2013, p. 2). The literature on the connection to nature is intricately associated with a significant research domain known as significant life experience (SLE) (Chawla, 1998; 2009). SLE research demonstrates that childhood experiences in nature commonly shape the perspectives of adults who hold a genuine concern for the environment.

3. Methodology

3.1 Target Group Selection

The study focuses on children aged 4-12 as the primary target group for implementing storytelling interventions. The selection of this age group is deliberate, considering the formative years

of cognitive development and the potential impact of environmental education during this critical period.

3.2 Pilot Study Design

The initial phase of the research involved the implementation of hands-on storytelling sessions in select schools in Kerala. The pilot study aimed to gauge the immediate reactions and responses of children to the interventions.

Key aspects of the pilot study design included:

- Storytelling sessions are structured to be interactive to engage children actively.
- Careful consideration is given to the selection of stories featuring non-anthropocentric storylines.

3.3 Data Collection

The methodology involved both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the project's impact.

- **Observations:** Observations during and after storytelling sessions provided qualitative insights into the children's emotional responses, engagement levels, and any observable shifts in attitudes towards nature.
- **Surveys:** Simple pre-and post-session surveys were administered to assess changes in children's perceptions, fears, and attitudes toward the environment and living beings.

3.4 Data Analysis

The qualitative data obtained from observations and feedback are analyzed thematically to identify noteworthy behavioral changes. Quantitative survey data are subjected to statistical analysis to determine any statistically significant shifts in attitudes or perceptions.

4. Pilot Study: Results and Discussions

The pilot study conducted in schools in Kerala involved a good number of student beneficiaries (500) and the preliminary findings leaned towards the positive impact of storytelling on environmental awareness. This paper discusses the preliminary observations of the pilot study,

emphasizing the potential of storytelling to create a sense of belonging to nature and foster environmental consciousness among children. The study aimed to use storytelling as a tool to enhance environmental literacy and empathy in children aged 4-12.

While the study is still in its initial phase, several encouraging observations have surfaced from the completed storytelling sessions. Storytellers have reported a noticeable increase in empathy among the participating children towards nature and other living beings. Notably, stories featuring animated portrayals of creatures such as lizards and spiders have contributed to a reduction in fear, fostering a more positive perception of insects.

It is essential to acknowledge that, as a longitudinal study with multiple storytelling sessions planned, a comprehensive and tangible assessment of the project's impact will be feasible only towards its conclusion. The early positive implications, however, serve as promising indicators for the potential long-term benefits of integrating storytelling into environmental education for children aged 4-12. In the long term, the study expects to observe sustained environmental literacy, continued empathy and connection to nature, influence on decision-making, the formation of environmentally conscious citizens, and a positive impact on educational practices. The outcomes are contingent on the storytelling interventions' design and duration, emphasizing the potential for lasting effects on participants' attitudes and behaviours. Longitudinal studies are proposed to measure the impact of teaching on learners' relationship with nature, compassion towards non-human nature, and pro-environmental beliefs and actions.

5. Implications and Recommendations

Based on the findings, the paper provides implications for educational practices, recommending the integration of storytelling into environmental education curricula. Additionally, suggestions for further research are proposed to explore the long-term effects of storytelling on environmental literacy.

6. Conclusion

The research reiterates the significance of storytelling in reviving environmental literacy and empathy, particularly among children, and highlights the potential for broader applications in environmental education programmes. By combining theoretical frameworks, empirical evidence from the pilot study, and practical recommendations, this research paper aims to contribute to the

discourse on innovative approaches to environmental education, with a specific focus on the transformative power of storytelling.

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Passionate Nature Enthusiasts - Rabindranath Tagore and M. T. Vasudevan Nair

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Introduction

The comparison between M. T. Vasudevan Nair and Rabindranath Tagore as passionate nature enthusiasts is being made here. The study confined itself to their attitude towards life, humanism, love of nature, and rural life, as revealed in their works. Both humanitarian writers may be different in their age, language, cultural background, and religion, but they share a common approach and characteristics. They are prolific and humanitarian writers. Both writers placed great emphasis on their own individuality in their characters.

Key Words: M. T. Vasudevan Nair Rabindranath Tagore Nature, Rain, Mist, River, Love,



M. T. Vasudevan Nair (born 15th July 1933)

Courtesy: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M._T._Vasudevan_Nair

This article is about two representative writers from two different states of India: Bengal and Kerala.

Rabindranath Tagore was born on May 7, 1861, in Calcutta as the son of Devendranath Tagore, a Bengali landowner. He was raised in an environment of culture and religion. Tagore dedicated much of his life to education, religion, and peace. He was a poet, novelist, short story writer, dramatist, social reformer, musician, painter, A practical idealist who has become a real dream in Shantiniketan Tagore, convinced of the need for education for his people, founded his famous Shantiniketan School, which later became Vishwa-Bharathi University. He believed that the common language should be the basis of all good writing. He wanted to free his people from the narrow-mindedness of Bengali society. Tagore received the Nobel Prize for literature in 1913 in Europe.

Madath Thekkepattu Vasudevan Nair was born on July 15, 1933, as the son of T. Narayanan and Ammaluamma, Kudallur, in Ponnani District, Kerala. As cinema director, writer, editor, and instructor, M. T. Vasudevan Nair, rose to fame. He has established himself as one of India's most renowned modern writers, having written novels, short tales, dramas, travelogues, stories, and journalism. Three kilometres from home is how he developed the habit of visiting the library. Many works of his have been translated into English and Hindi. He won the Kerala Sahitya Academy Award for *The Legacy* and the Central Award for *Kaalam*.

Passionate Naturalists, M. T. Vasudevan Nair and Rabindranath Tagore

In his poetic work *Glimpses of Bengal*, Tagore spoke of the peace that comes with being alone and the splendour of the flat land under a clear sky. The lifestyles of the villages are not fast paced, yet they are also not static. The cadence of work and play is the same, as if they go hand in hand. It sounds as though they have blended into a soft, dreamy, and melancholy tune that is wide but subdued. The beach extends all the way to the edge, and in the distance, he makes out a row of trees that runs parallel to the Padma River. The trees show different shades of blue in some spots and pale, green, or even earthy grey in others.

M. T. Vasudevan Nair is a natural enthusiast who adores the Nila River. He had said to himself that he loved the known Nila River far more than the world's incomprehensible seas.

Writings about the meandering river Nila, with their waves breaking upon the banks one after another, he brings about a closeness in the link between the happiness and sorrows of the characters in the works and the rhythm of the waves of the river. He has captured the beauty of moonlight nights and covered mountains realistically.

The Nila River is adored by wildlife enthusiast M. T. Vasudevan Nair. He said to himself that he is far more in love with the known Nila River than he is with the vast oceans. Texts describe the Nila River's meandering course and the successive waves that crash against its banks in great detail. He ends the relationship that existed between the rhythm of the river's waves and the joys and sufferings of the characters in his works. The author has skillfully and honestly portrayed the allure of moonlit nights and snow-capped mountains.

In his piece *Valarthu Mrigangal*, which portrays the life of a circus performer, he describes moonlight as coming in through the window and speaking into the room. The Western Ghats appear as a shadow in the mist. The night's cloudy silence permeates the environment.

The fragrance of mango flowers filled the air on this specific full moon night in spring, according to Tagore's description of the night in his book *The Renunciation*. The sweet sounds of a hardworking bird were tucked away in the dense foliage of an ancient tree near a pond.

Simple, organic, and subjective is M. T. Vasudevan Nair's love of nature. He's crazy about rain that comes with lightning and thunder. He likens the rain to his mother in his piece, *Karkitakam*. When you approach, you assume it is in a nice mood, but it demonstrates how to be sentimental when you least expect it to be.

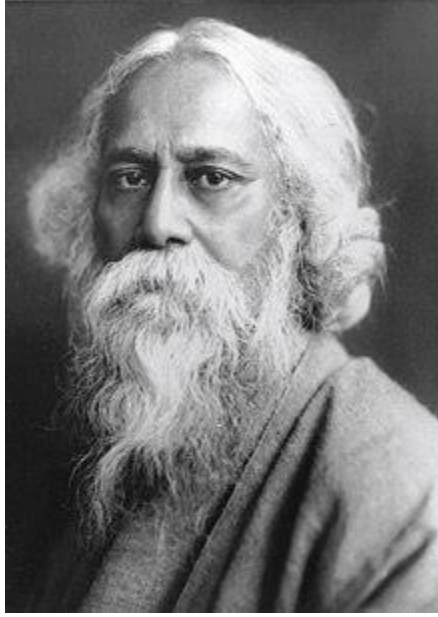
Tagore is a passionate admirer of clouds and rain. This is seen in his book, *Gora*: The sky grew darker in the middle of the wet evening, the moisture in it making everything heavy. Under

the ominous cloud cover, Calcutta rested peacefully, like a large, wretched dog curled up with its head resting on its tail. Rain has been pouring steadily since the previous evening; it has not been heavy enough to clear the muck from the streets entirely, but it has been enough to create some conditions conducive to mudslides. The enormous clouds persisted even after the afternoon's rain stopped at four o'clock.

In terms of content and style, *Asuravith* is among M. T. Vasudevan Nair's best books. It takes place in rural Kerala during a time frame when the conventional combined family was beginning to fall apart. The book addresses how male-female relationships and familial allegiances function in a tradition-bound society while also examining religion and caste identities. He said the river rises in the monsoon and floods the road, which over time causes the ferry beside the river to deteriorate.

The local temple is next to the parapet, where Govindankutty spends his evenings sitting. He enjoys climbing the stairs to the hill and perching on the overhanging rock to watch the ferry boat sail past. The reader may visualise these incidents in his mind's eye since M. T. Vasudevan Nair depicts everything so vividly.

Nine years after her beloved abandoned her, Vimala is still waiting for him in M. T. Vasudevan Nair's *Manju*. The mountain appears in the stories in an eerie way. The emotions we feel both inside and outside of the lives of characters are metaphorically represented by mist.



Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941)

Courtesy: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rabindranath_Tagore

The true enigma to Tagore is that he also adores the mist. In *Stay Birds*, Tagore writes, “A stunning surprise is bestowed by the likeness of love in the mist that settles into the hills’ core.” One could refer to Tagore’s language as the language of nature. He feels compelled to express his profound love of nature through metaphors, similes, and parallels. He has become known as the poet of nature after coining the phrases “The Land Bereaved,” “Evening’s Verdant Splendour,” “Boundless Horizon,” “The Babbling Streams’ Unsettled Flow,” “Abandoned Remnants of Innocence,” and “Morning’s Fresh Dew” etc.

In Kerala, seeing the sun and rain together is a common sight that makes M. T. Vasudevan Nair very happy. The sun fell beneath the cloud cover, he writes in *Kurukkante Kalyanam*. “Rain and shine together on the jackals’ wedding day,” the sun said as it began to shower.” Tagore is a big fan of storms and rain. He likens a raging lunatic who has broken free from his restraints to a storm in a passage from *The Hungry Stones*. Most nature’s creations serve various purposes. Man and nature are connected in some way. Through the understanding of its primary characters, nature is depicted. Viewed through the protagonist’s eyes, the environment is progressively revealed, with nature developing according to his emotions and perspective.

Nature and Personality

M. T. Vasudevan Nair and Tagore's depictions of nature and conflict are consistently in line with the inner thoughts of their protagonists. They see nature as something that constantly combines with human existence and emotions, not just a background. In addition, the plot advances, and nature plays a major part in presenting the central theme of the narrative. The distinctive mood that the authors wish to express to the readers is emphasised and strengthened by nature.

In his stories, Tagore reveals himself to be a talented painter who captures the atmosphere and colours of nature. This extensive coverage of nature and humanity offers a unique full-length video and dubbed version of his stories, painting a picture of Bengal's rich natural splendour.

In a M. T. Vasudevan Nair's work, the image of the howling wind that seems to mirror Baputty's anguish highlights the strain of the main character. The river is completely overflowing. With immense force, the waves pound the coast. The moonlight bounces off the surface of the river, giving it the appearance of an uncomfortable smile. There's silence, only the sound of the river.

Tagore creates specific emotions through nature, just like M. T. Vasudevan Nair does. Tagore's poetry is distinctive and poetic because it explores the relationship between man and the environment. He makes use of either comparable or contrasting natural phenomena to elucidate the concepts and mood of the piece.

Similar to M. T. Vasudevan Nair, Tagore creates specific emotions through nature. Tagore's writings are poetic and unforgettable because of the relationship between man and the environment. He makes use of both comparable and contrasting natural phenomena to elucidate the themes and mood of the work. In Tagore's tale, nature and man are intimately connected; the author frequently conveys the hero's innermost thoughts through the portrayal of nature. When others express their thoughts through nature, human feelings take on depth and completion. As the Postmaster departs the community, the poor and lonely girl is left on her own in *The Postmaster*. She hopes to find a place in his life, loves him, and expects him to take her along for the ride. The

gloomy dampness of the rain outside matched the tears that were pouring from her eyes. It seemed as though the rain would never stop, making village roads unusable and necessitating boat marketing.

Conclusion

Despite being written in two distinct languages and coming from separate parts of India, there are a lot of parallels between the two works. Many shared influences on their minds, and art produced the idea, themes, storyline, and style. They also have similar writing requirements, attitudes, and viewpoints. They have a great deal of empathy for the underprivileged. They resist oppression, exploitation, and hypocrisy of all types. Both authors place a strong emphasis on intimacy, affection, and family relationships in their literature. These authors fervently believe that all human nature—rich or poor, high or low, traditional or modern—is found in the same world.

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